

Alexander Campbell's
Theology

WINFRED ERNEST GARRISON

Columbia University
in the City of New York

LIBRARY



PURCHASED FROM
THE
WILLIAM C. SCHERMERHORN
MEMORIAL FUND

Alexander Campbell's Theology

Its Sources and Historical Setting

By

WINFRED ERNEST GARRISON, PH. D.



ST. LOUIS
CHRISTIAN PUBLISHING COMPANY
1900

38-41598

Copyrighted, 1900
by
W. E. GARRISON

NOTE

The studies, the results of which are embodied in this volume, were begun in the preparation of a thesis for a degree from the University of Chicago in 1897, under the title, "The Sources of Alexander Campbell's Theology." They have been continued, and are now published, in the hope that those who are interested or may become interested in the subject, may derive from them some aid in interpreting Mr. Campbell's work as a theologian in the light of its historical setting. It is of little consequence that a theologian is attacked by his enemies and defended by his friends. But it is of much importance that he be understood; and he cannot be understood—his strength cannot be appreciated, much less can his shortcomings be reasonably condoned—without an acquaintance with the conditions under which he worked and the influences which worked upon him. It is hoped that this attempt to view Alexander Campbell's theology from the historical standpoint may contribute something to the understanding of it.

21 APRIL, 1900.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION—THE HISTORICAL METHOD	9
I. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM OF UNITY	23
II. PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS	77
III. THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE	117
IV. THE KINGDOM OF GOD	161
V. AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION	185
VI. FAITH AND REPENTANCE	213
VII. BAPTISM	229
VIII. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION AND REGENERATION	255
IX. THE IDEA OF GOD	285

TO
MY FIRST AND BEST TEACHER OF THEOLOGY
AND OF RELIGION
A SEEKER AFTER TRUTH
AN ENCOURAGER OF YOUTHFUL EFFORT
AND A FRIEND OF ALL GOOD LEARNING
My Father.

INTRODUCTION

THE HISTORICAL METHOD

He who undertakes to estimate the intellectual achievements of the nineteenth century and to generalize upon the history of thought in this period, cannot fail to admit that the most fruitful and far-reaching general conception which this age has brought into prominence is the idea of development. Based upon a metaphysics which finds the essence of reality to consist, not in the changeless identity of an unknowable "substance" in which all attributes inhere, but in the process by which functions are fulfilled, forms developed and new adaptations made to changing conditions, it quickly passed beyond the limits of speculative philosophy and found application in the fields of science, history, theology, and

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

every study which seeks a knowledge of nature, man or God. If the very essence of reality lies in development, growth and adaptation, then knowledge of any portion of reality is to be sought in the study of its process of development; i. e., in its history. In its most general application, therefore, the idea of development gives rise to what may be called the *historical method* of studying all phenomena.

According to the historical method, it is maintained that any object of knowledge, whether it be an organic formation, an idea or an institution, is not known as the scientific observer seeks to know it until one knows the sources from which it sprang, the processes by which it came into being, and the changes which it has undergone in adaptation to varying conditions. The effect of the application of this conception in the various fields of thought has been little short of revolutionary. The general principle of evolution (of which the Darwinian theory of the origin of species

INTRODUCTION

is a mere detail) is the most notable product of the idea of development, or the historical method, as applied to the understanding of the natural world. The scientific study of an organ of an animal or a plant, viewed from this standpoint, includes not only anatomy, which studies the organ statically as a mere complex of tissues, but morphology, which investigates the origin and development of the organ in the species, and physiology, which inquires how it performs its functions at the present time. It is not possible to attain a complete scientific knowledge of any organic formation, either plant or animal, without these three elements.

Applied to the study of the phenomena which constitute the recognized domain of history, the idea of development has produced what is sometimes called the "new historical method." It is the method which treats history as an organism whose parts grew together and can not be understood separately; as a succession of events causally related, the

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

ultimate essence of which lies in their causal connection. History is no longer a *heap* of facts, a collection of anecdotes which may be told in any order without substantial loss. It is not viewed as a mere *row* of facts, succeeding each other in a definite order but with only a chronological sequence, as the old annalists represented it. It is a *chain* of facts logically linked together, and the essential reality of it all lies in the fact that it represents a continuous process of development.

Applied to the study of political, social and religious institutions and ideas, there has been produced what may be broadly termed the *historical method*. An idea or an institution is a growth. As a plant grows out of a seed, so an idea develops from earlier ideas. Varying conditions of soil, moisture, heat and light influence the growth of the plant; varying local and temporary needs, individual abilities and personal adaptations determine the form of the idea. Chemical and physical analyses of the condition of

INTRODUCTION

the plant at any single moment give only partial knowledge of it. To know its life, we must know how it springs from a seed of such a sort, is modified by certain conditions and bears seed after its kind. Similarly, to understand a political institution, a social custom or a theological idea, it is necessary to examine its origin in sources already known, in order to give it an organic connection with the general current of human history, and to study its development under the pressure of special needs and impulses. This is the historical method.

If this method as here described be applied to the study of a system of theology, it will mean that for the time the critical process is laid aside and no attempt is made to determine whether or not the development which actually took place ever ought to have taken place, or to judge whether it meets the requirement and embodies the best thought of a time other than that which gave rise to it. The study will inquire into the philosophical presuppositions of the system,

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

its affinity with other systems preceding and contemporary, and the special conditions which influenced its leaders apart from the general current of thought which influenced all alike; but, in so far as this method is employed in its purity, it will not attempt to perform the function of an apologetic or a polemic. It will orient the system in the general history of Christian doctrine. It will be a study of sources and historical setting and development, but it will not profess to be either critical or constructive, although it is the necessary preparation for a consideration of that sort.

It is the purpose of this book to present a study of Alexander Campbell's theology by the historical method. He was not a voice crying in the wilderness and having no connection with his age except to receive from its degeneracy an impulse toward reformation. Try as he would, he could not sweep aside all that men had thought during the past eighteen centuries, and lead a religious movement or formulate a system of Christian

INTRODUCTION

doctrine as if a true word had not been spoken since the death of the Apostles. He was in close relation with the thought of his time, and it is that fact which gives him a definite place in the general development of Christian thought. There were, to be sure, local conditions which furnished the stimulus for his activity, but an examination of his work will show that it was not simply a reaction against these local abuses.

Attention is called to the following points which must come up for consideration in the course of an historical and genetic study of Mr. Campbell's theology:

First, the problem of the reunion of Christendom, which was prominent in all of his religious thinking, was not an idea which was first conceived by him. Although unknown in the locality in which Mr. Campbell lived and worked, the idea of Christian union was one which had seldom been without an advocate from the time when the Protestant revolution broke the external unity of

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

mediæval Romanism. But the individualism which was implicit in the Reformation of the sixteenth century must attain a fuller development and a more adequate statement before unity could be attained without a sacrifice of liberty. To understand the significance of Mr. Campbell's plea for union, therefore, in its relation to the general history of thought, it will be necessary to trace the development of the problem of Christian union and the condition of its solution, in the development of individualism through the thought of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Second, in working out his views of Christian doctrine on a basis as thoroughly Biblical as possible, he held a definite theory of the nature of man and the method by which knowledge of both natural and spiritual things must enter his mind. It is evident that this inheritance of psychology and theory of knowledge, which he received from the system of philosophy then current, could not fail to exercise an influence upon his

INTRODUCTION

formulation of Christian doctrine. For example, if he held (as he did) that man is so constituted that all his knowledge comes to him through sensation and reflection, he could not hold that man is born with the idea of God or that knowledge of divine things is infused into him in some mysterious manner independent of all sensible means. At many other points there can be seen the influence of his philosophical presuppositions. It is necessary, therefore, in studying the sources and historical setting of the system of theology, to state briefly the characteristics of the philosophy then current in the circles in which Mr. Campbell moved—the philosophy of John Locke—and to show, in the consideration of the several doctrines, how and where the influence of this philosophy made itself felt.

Third, as affecting his view and use of the Bible, no conception which Mr. Campbell held was more determinative than his emphasis on the distinction between the dispensations or covenants. It

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

is important to note that this idea was revived rather than originated by him, for it appeared as the distinguishing feature of a theological movement which originated in Holland in the seventeenth century under the leadership of Cocceius and Witsius, was transplanted into Scotland in the eighteenth, and was adopted, in some of its features, by the Seceder Presbyterian Church, of which Mr. Campbell was a member. We must note the influence of this and other theological systems upon the one which we have under consideration.

Fourth, the special conditions which were presented by his religious training, his experiences in Glasgow among the Haldanes, the condition in which he found popular religion in America on his arrival, and his experiences in fellowship and controversy with Baptists and Presbyterians, furnished the occasion for the development of the doctrines and in some degree determined the form in which they were cast. This material, which has already been presented in the form

INTRODUCTION

of memoirs and narrative history of the Disciples of Christ, need only be touched upon from time to time.

Fifth, a statement must be made, as complete as may be, of the substance of Mr. Campbell's final teaching upon the several doctrines to which he attributed most importance. This will represent the outcome of the operation of the preceding influences.

It is scarcely necessary to add as a further warning against misconception that, in speaking of the sources of Alexander Campbell's theology, there is no implication of anything derogatory to his originality, in so far as originality is a virtue. To say that he had sources is only to say that he was not isolated from the currents of the world's thought. We would not consider him condemned, or even discredited, if it should appear that he was indebted for valuable suggestions to Sandeman, or Arminius, or Sabellius, or Arius. The utterly ludicrous "offshoot-of-Sandemanianism" theory, which a hostile critic promulgated as a novelty

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

something like half a century after it had been originally propounded and exploded, not only is an incomparably feeble piece of historical criticism, but manifests a complete failure to grasp the significance of sources in the development of doctrine.

Certainly it can no longer be necessary to defend the proposition that Alexander Campbell was a theologian, and that therefore it is pertinent to make investigations into his theology. The old allegation, which used to be frequently heard, that Campbell's "Christian System" is the creed of the Disciples of Christ, has fallen into disuse. The book is merely a statement of the author's private theological views, which are interesting as being the opinions of one very influential man. The present work does not profess to deal with the official and authoritative theology of the Disciples of Christ, for they have no such authoritative system, but, as its title indicates, only with *ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY*.

CHAPTER I

The Development of the Problem of Unity

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

- I. THE PROBLEM—TO COMBINE SOLIDARITY AND INDIVIDUALISM :
 1. Both elements not developed until end of XVIIIth century.
 2. Solidarity embodied in mediæval Romanism.
 3. Individualism implicit in the Reformation.
- II. DOGMATISM OF FIRST REFORMERS :
 1. Luther—Augsburg Confession.
 2. Calvin—the Latin Theology Protestantized.
- III. BREAK-UP OF PROTESTANTISM :
 1. First great revolt—Arminianism.
 2. Multiplication of sects.
- IV. REACTION AGAINST SECTARIAN SPIRIT :
 1. Comprehension schemes—Leibnitz, Fos-suet, Spinola, Stillingfleet.
 2. Toleration—Baxter, Milton, Locke.
 3. Latitudinarianism—Cambridge Platonists.
- V. INDIVIDUALISM FULLY DEVELOPED :
 1. Emotional and mystical—Pietism, Moravianism, Methodism.
 2. Intellectual—the “Enlightenment.”
- VI. NINETEENTH CENTURY PROBLEM—TO TRANSCEND INDIVIDUALISM.
- VII. CAMPBELL'S SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM OF UNITY.

During the three centuries of Protestantism prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century there had been many attempts to restore the unity of a divided and still dividing church. Many men of large soul and wide spiritual vision had reacted against the narrow partisanism, the hateful controversies and the bigoted exclusiveness which marred the peace of Christendom. Some of the most influential men in England and on the Continent had consulted and planned for the restoration of unity among Christians—between Catholics and Protestants, between Lutherans and Reformed, between Anglicans and Dissenters, between Presbyterians and Independents. But none of these attempts made more than the faintest and most fleeting impression on the religious world. Not only did they fail of the immediate accomplishment of

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

their purpose, but they failed even to inaugurate any important and lasting movement in that direction.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century a young man without reputation, living in a remote district, far from the centers of the world's thought, made an attempt, in many respects not unlike those which had preceded, to bring about the union of Christians. The result was not a spasmodic effort followed by relapse, but the beginning of an important religious movement which has had for its chief mission the advocacy of Christian union. Whether or not the formation of another party in the religious world is a legitimate method of advocating this reform, or one which is likely to advance the cause, is a question which does not call for discussion in this connection. The significant fact is that, whether effective or not, the attempt aroused enough interest to make it the starting-point of a movement which has continued and increased unto this day. The explanation of this phenomenon can

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

be found only in the fact that the problem of unity was not fully developed and ready for solution until about the time of Mr. Campbell's attempt.

The most important problem which confronted the religious world at the beginning of the nineteenth century was this: How is it possible to reconcile the individual's liberty of conscience and intellect, with that degree of unity of the church in spirit and organization which is demanded by the will of Christ and by the practical requirement for efficiency in his service? Dispensing with the idea of an unlimited ecclesiastical monarchy exercising absolute authority over its subjects in all matters of religious faith and observance, what power shall prevent the utter disintegration of Christendom into as many warring parties as there are free individuals?

Obviously the full significance of this tension between individual freedom and religious solidarity could not be appreciated until each of the conditions had been fully developed. It was not until

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

the end of the eighteenth century that the conception of the free individual was completely developed. The philosophy of the Enlightenment was the most important instrument in the development of this idea, and it became therefore the philosophical basis for those political movements at the close of the century which aimed to throw off all the restraints of organized government and allow untrammelled liberty to the individual. Outbreaks like the French Revolution were necessary before governments could know how uncompromising was the demand for popular liberty, which most modern governments have learned how to grant without precipitating themselves into anarchy. Equally necessary was the chaotic condition into which the church fell as the result of the extreme development of individualism in the eighteenth century, that it might be known that any future unity of the church must be based upon a recognition of the freedom of the individual. Not until near the beginning of the nine-

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

teenth century was there an adequate apprehension of these two essential conditions of the problem—solidarity and individualism.

Mediæval Romanism furnished a complete and consistent embodiment of the principle of solidarity. There were rebels, to be sure, who renounced the authority of the church. There were from time to time agitators whose work implied a demand for the recognition of the individual. But that demand was consistently ignored, and the church remained a thorough-going exponent of the idea of unity through absolutism. The theological system which had been formulated by the great Augustine in the fifth century had given the theoretical basis for this development. Man is totally depraved by his inheritance of original sin. He can do nothing to effect his own salvation, except to allow himself to be the passive recipient of divine saving grace. This grace is committed to the church for distribution and is bestowed upon men through the sacra-

ments. All that man has to do is to put himself in communication with this sole channel of divine grace—the Holy Catholic Church—and be saved. The individual, as defined by modern thought, did not exist. The perfect unity which that church aimed at was not a unity of individuals, but unity through the suppression of individualism. In its period of Scholasticism, Romanism departed from the theology of Augustine at many points, so that a part of the work of the Reformers was to restore some neglected elements of Augustinianism. But Romanism never forgot that part of the doctrine of the great Bishop of Hippo which taught that man is but the incarnation of an atom of original sin, who is indebted to the church for all the means of his salvation, and is therefore subject to the absolute authority of the church all the days of his life.

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century was, in the very essence of its method, a revolution. As a repudiation of the absolute authority of the

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

church, which had been the sole bond of unity in Christendom, it could justify itself only by an appeal to the right of revolution. The theory which is always implicit in revolution, furnishing at once its justification and its method of operation, is that the individuals who are governed are of more value than any fixed scheme of government. In political revolutions this normally takes the form of a declaration that the right to govern belongs to the people, but its most fundamental principle is a recognition of the worth of individuals. Revolution always marks the point where the value of individuals begins to outweigh the value of any arrangement for securing unity, either political or religious, at their expense.

Two hypotheses are involved, by implication at least, in every popular revolutionary movement: First, it implies that no unifying and controlling power is legitimate which is essentially external to the individual; this immediately justifies the destructive work of repudi-

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

ating the old despotic authority, thereby leaving the individual free and uncontrolled. Second, since no revolution contemplates either the establishment of a new despotism or the perpetuation of anarchy, it implies that there is within the individual the possibility of a synthetic and constructive force sufficient for the control and unification of the social body. It is this second implication which, though not apparent on the surface, is the real justification of popular rebellion against unity through absolutism. It is safe to destroy the external bulwarks of the established order, only on the supposition that there are, or may be developed, within the individuals themselves, all the restraints and unifying forces needed to maintain the common life of the social body.

The Renaissance in the fifteenth century was the discovery of the individual through the media of painting, sculpture, popular literature and revived classicism. After being for long centuries a mere unit in the mass, the individual

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

first came to himself by *feeling* as an individual in the realm of art. The æsthetic sensibilities first felt the thrill of the new life. The Reformation in the sixteenth century was the process by which that newly discovered individual began to assert himself as such in the sphere of religion. But the problem of individualism had as yet only been felt and its meaning groped after. It had been implied as the basis of important movements, but it had not yet been thought through. Its two implications mentioned above had not yet come to light.

When the Reformers proceeded upon their own responsibility as free men in revolting from Rome, they acted upon the principle that no external ecclesiastical authority is necessary. But they were not prepared to maintain this as a general principle, for they created other ecclesiastical authorities in place of that which they had discarded. Still less did they comprehend an individualism which contained within itself the ele-

ments of order and unity. Therefore we are justified in saying that in the Reformation there was involved an *implicit individualism*. Because there was individualism, there could be a revolt against established ecclesiastical absolutism. Because it was only implicit, the revolution must be followed by a period of servitude under new masters (the dogmatism of the Reformation theologies), and that in turn by a period of anarchy and extreme disunion.

Of the great Reformers of the first generation, Zwingli was the only one who is free from the charge of arrant dogmatism. Both Luther and Calvin were temperamentally dogmatic, and to that fact is due much of their success in welding their followers into compact and effective bodies for the necessary war against Romanism. The Saxon reformer was endowed by nature with an impetuous spirit which could meet fearlessly the assaults of his enemies, but could not with equanimity endure opposition from his friends. He would

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

not hold fellowship with those whose interpretations of Scripture differed from his own. There were three principles, by no means co-ordinate, which Luther made in different senses the basis of his movement. They were: the doctrine of justification by faith, the sole authority of Scripture, and the right of private judgment. To the first of these, which furnished the immediate occasion for the Reformation and the material content of its teaching, he clung consistently and tenaciously. The second can become effective for the liberation of men from ecclesiastical authority only in so far as it is accompanied by the third. This third he exercised to secure freedom from the control of the Roman hierarchy and its traditions, but did not grant to others who sought freedom from the yoke of dogmatic Lutheranism by an appeal to their own interpretation of Scripture. The classic illustration of this temperament is Luther's refusal to grant Christian fellowship to Zwingli, because the latter interpreted the words

“hoc est meum corpus” as signifying the *spiritual* presence of the Lord’s body in the bread of the communion. The Augsburg Confession of 1530 was the first authoritative declaration of Protestant belief upon a few great doctrines. Its adoption formally ushered in the age of Protestant dogmatism and it became as authoritative for Protestantism in Germany as the decrees of the Council of Trent were for Romanism. When religious peace was reached in the Empire in 1555, toleration was granted, under certain restrictions, to Catholics on the one hand and to adherents of the Augsburg Confession on the other. There was no toleration for dissenting Protestants.

Calvin was by birth a Frenchman, by training a lawyer, and by nature a logician. With that singular combination of clearness of vision and limited range of vision which is the peculiar heritage of his race, he saw no problem to which he could not see the solution, and was blind to every element of

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

knowledge or experience which could not be incorporated harmoniously into his system of thought. This characteristic, united with a genius for systematization which has seldom if ever been equaled, produced a well-nigh perfect dogmatist. But whereas Luther's theology was not rigidly systematized, and left room for a time for individual differences on points not explicitly defined, Calvinism was from the first a completely organized system, claiming authority, it is true, in the name of the Scriptures rather than in its own name, but perfectly intolerant of any doctrinal deviation and exercising over its adherents the same intellectual tyranny which had been the mark of the Roman Church. By so much as the burning of Servetus at Geneva by the order of Calvin was a more flagrant act of intolerance than Luther's refusal to hold Christian fellowship with Zwingli, by so much was Calvinism the more rigidly dogmatic and the more inconsistent

with the principle of individualism to which it owed its existence.

Henceforth the process of the enforcement of authority gradually lost its inquisitorial character, by the abolition of the ecclesiastical machinery by which submission to authority had been enforced. Instead of forcing all men to accept the doctrinal formularies as laid down, Protestant dogmatism demanded the acceptance of them by all who sought entrance to the particular communion which had adopted them. Every man could accept them and come into the church, or reject them and stay out, at his option. This was true from the first of all non-established Protestant churches, but was arrived at by the established churches only through a gradual development which lasted through generations. The attainment of this stage marks the beginning of what may be called denominationalism in the modern sense. It is marked by a more or less reluctant acquiescence in the divided condition which Protestant-

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

ism begins to assume, and it indicates that the first half of the implicit individualism of the Reformation is becoming explicit. The cessation of persecution by Protestant churches which had it in their power to persecute, indicates a realization of the fact that the division of the church is preferable to a unity maintained by the exercise of external authority for the coercion of the individual. To be sure, each division long held that salvation was impossible outside of itself, but it was something of a gain for individual liberty to allow a man to be comfortably damned in the free exercise of his own judgment, rather than to force salvation upon him by going into the highways and byways and compelling him to come in.

Almost immediately upon the formulation of the great dogmatic systems of Protestantism, began those movements which led to the break-up of Protestantism into a multitude of warring factions. Passing by the disputes between the two great parties, Lutheran and Re-

formed (Calvinistic)—disputes which were spared much of the bitterness which might have characterized them, owing to the happy circumstance of their geographical separateness—there soon began to arise dissensions within each party. Lutheranism, owing to the comparative looseness of its organization, was the first to suffer. And as the tendency to individual doctrinal variations became more pronounced after the death of the great leader of the party, orthodox Lutheranism itself was vitiated by its attempt to brace itself against impending dissolution. In the Lutheranism of the seventeenth century there is seen a lack of the nobility of spirit, the firmness of grasp, the practical earnestness which had characterized Luther, with all his dogmatism. The Latin theology was substantially restored, the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith obscured, and the right of private judgment virtually abrogated in favor of a narrow and legalistic interpretation of

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

Scripture in accordance with traditional rules of exegesis.

But the influences which were felt more largely in England and Scotland came from Calvinism and the systems which sprang up within and around and against it. The first great revolt against Calvinism as an authoritative and necessary compend of religious truth was the system of Arminianism. It was, to be sure, a system against a system, both fixed and carefully defined. Nevertheless, the rise of a combatant against the dominant Calvinism of the Reformed church, marks the real beginning of the exercise of the right of Protestant dissent. That men should dare to combat a system as rigid in its doctrines and as sulphurous in its maledictions upon all who rejected it as was Calvinism, was, without respect to the doctrinal merits of the two systems, a distinct advance in the history of the growth of individualism. It was Arminianism, says Tulloch, which "revived the suppressed rational side of the original Protestant movement and

for the first time organized it into a definite power and assigned to it its due place both in theology and in the church." It represented, moreover, a moral, religious and emotional, as well as an intellectual, reaction, precipitating as it did a return to Bible study and a renewed declaration of allegiance to the Scriptures as the only source of religious authority. Both Luther and Calvin had accepted the main outlines of Augustinianism as a presupposition, and it was through this medium that they looked at and interpreted the Scriptures. The exigencies of the times, the fierce struggle against Romanism, had so urgently demanded the formation of a system that there was no time for a thoroughly Biblical reconstruction by the first generation of Reformers. Arminianism was, with whatever success, an attempt at an unbiased Biblical reconstruction of Christian doctrine. But Arminianism, as formulated in the Remonstrance of 1610, though historically the most important, was not the only theological protest

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

against Calvinism. In no factious spirit and with no desire or expectation of producing schism in the Reformed Church, theologians, who found themselves unable to acquiesce in the ethical and religious implications of Calvinism, exercised the right of dissent and formulated other statements of the nature of God and man and the process of man's salvation. In no case were these new systems drawn up deliberately as the constitutions of new sects, and in some cases they succeeded in remaining merely schools of thought within the church. Among such may be mentioned that modification of Calvinism which was held by several successive teachers of the school of Saumur, in France. These men, among whom the best known name is that of Amyraut, taught predestination conditioned on the divine foreknowledge of each individual's faith or unbelief. This teaching remained a phase of opinion in the Reformed Church in France just as infralapsarian and supralapsarian

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

Calvinism were phases of opinion in the same church.

Much more important than the school of Saumur is the so-called Federal or Covenant Theology, which sprang up about one generation after Arminianism. It was, like the latter, an embodiment of the same ethical protest against the rigors of Calvinism, its fierce conception of God and its failure to recognize the freedom of the human individual; and it was, too, an attempt to establish and put in operation a reasonable method of Biblical exegesis. So conspicuous was this latter characteristic that Cocceius, the leader of this school, has been called "the father of modern exegesis." Of this theology more will be said in a subsequent chapter, but in this connection it is noteworthy as a manifestation of dissent from Calvinism. No religious party ever crystallized about this system and it remained free to leaven the thought of the Dutch Reformed Church and to influence the development of doctrine in Scotland, whither its influence

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

was carried in the eighteenth century.

The development as traced thus far exhibits an increasing divergence of theological opinion within the Reformed Church, but no fatal break in the external unity of the body. But at the same time movements were taking place which led to the separation of one after another sect. Most of these separating bodies represented distinct disruptive tendencies which had existed within Romanism before the Reformation, and now, feeling the loosening of the bond of authority, became, by the very law of their being, separatists from Protestantism as well as from Romanism.

Foremost among these essentially separative movements was that of the Anabaptists, who were from the beginning the representatives of a most intense individualism. Their most fundamental characteristic was not, as the name would indicate, opposition to infant baptism and the practice of re-baptizing those who came to them, but insistence on a "regenerate church membership." This

phrase lent itself to various interpretations, as it does to-day, according to the meaning that is attached to the term regeneration; but in any case the fundamental conception is that the individual's salvation depends solely upon his own personal relation with God, and not in any degree upon his association with any body of people who may be called the church. In protesting against the institutionalism which they conceived to be the failing of Protestantism even in the hands of the Reformers, the Anabaptists entirely eliminated the idea of solidarity, the social side of Christianity, and developed an individualism which cheerfully acquiesced in the dissolution of Christendom into a multitude of sects, since they attached no value to unity. Protestantism, considered as the restoration of the long-observed element of individualism in religion, finds its most extreme expression in the position of the Anabaptists. That they do not represent the highest type of Protestantism, is due not only to the fact that for a

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

time they ran into various sorts of fanaticism, but to the much more significant fact that Protestantism, as we interpret it, means not the exclusion of the idea of solidarity, but a proper distribution of emphasis in the valuation of the individual and the united body.

The Schwenkfeldians, a sect founded by a contemporary and friend of Luther, illustrated this same tendency and that, too, without obscuring the main issue by laying special stress upon one ordinance. Schwenkfeld differed from the Anabaptists in not insisting upon immersion, but he contended that the Reformers, like the Romanists, made too much of the external and objective means of grace which are associated with the church. He appealed to the consciousness of the individual in a tone and spirit highly suggestive of the plea of the Quakers for reliance upon the "inner light."

Socinianism, the rise of which was contemporary with the Protestant Reformation, not only involved an attack upon the most fundamental doctrines of

the faith, as held by both Romanists and Reformers, but exhibited a restless and lawless spirit, an impatience of all restraints which seriously threatened the efficiency of the Protestant propaganda. The burning of the Socinian Michael Servetus at Geneva, by Calvin, has already been cited as the crowning exhibition of Protestant intolerance. Yet it was not alone his heresy, as such, which Calvin took such extreme measures to restrain. With all his theologic hatred of opposition, it is scarcely conceivable that Calvin would have burned James Arminius under similar circumstances. Servetus as a Socinian represented a disintegrating tendency in the ecclesiastico-political body.

The dogmatic, autocratic and inconsistent unity which Calvin maintained, carried the Reformation through its period of life and death struggle with Romanism, and then disintegrating individualism, which had been in abeyance for a season, resumed its work. A state of war demands union, and even an army of rebels against

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

constituted authority must place themselves under a new authority till their war for liberty is over. So Protestantism won its first victory by the maintenance of dogmatic unity under the leadership of the great reformers. But often the military leader of a successful struggle for liberty, intoxicated by the temporary authority which he has exercised, seeks to make himself perpetual dictator, and a new rebellion is necessary to liberate the people from the yoke of the liberator. So Protestant dogmatism tried to maintain its authority after the need of unity under it had passed. The new rebellion which thus arose raged through the seventeenth century and continued with waning intensity through the eighteenth.

It is not necessary here to enumerate the sects which sprang up under this impulse. Some of them subdivided so readily that they can scarcely be said to exhibit any regard for unity of any sort. In others, the inherited demand for unity was indicated by the constant

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

tendency to systematize; but it was the unity of those like-minded in all points of doctrine and not unity of all Christians, or even all Protestants, in a single church. The idea was that there could be no ecclesiastical unity without uniformity of opinions. Yet every man had the right to make his opinions, to formulate them into a system and to exclude from fellowship all those who refused to comply with them. It was this condition,—the multitude of belligerent Protestant sects, each trying to bring the world within its fold and yet setting up its own individual fence as the boundary of the fold,—which aided in bringing to light more clearly that inherent contradiction which we have mentioned as furnishing the problem of Protestantism from the day when Luther nailed his theses until the present hour.

In general it may be said that from our standpoint it was the function of the seventeenth century, “that wretched century of strife,” as Herder calls it, to develop this problem in its most conspicu-

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

ous, because most disagreeable, form. Already, before the end of that century there had arisen in the more enlightened minds a loathing of the petty controversies about doctrine and polity between the various Protestant parties. Bossuet, in his work on *The Variations of Protestantism*, had predicted that the inherent tendency to division must ultimately lead to its complete disintegration and disappearance, and there seemed to be good ground for that belief. The more thoughtful Protestants became alarmed, and now there began a series of notable attempts to find some method by which this strife of religious parties could be reconciled. The various movements in this direction may be classed under the heads of comprehension, toleration and latitudinarianism.

Perhaps the earliest form taken by this disgust at the pettiness of theological controversy is seen in the *comprehension* schemes which were formulated and promulgated in considerable number both in England and upon the continent.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

The best and broadest minds of that day turned readily in this direction. George Calixtus, who was a pioneer in the department of irenics, suggested that all Christians ought to be able to unite in the restoration of primitive Christianity, by which he, like Newman, meant the New Testament plus the interpretations of the first five centuries. Leibnitz and Bossuet carried on a correspondence with a view to finding a possible reconciliation between the Catholic and Protestant bodies and, when this was seen to be impracticable, Leibnitz turned his attention to the formulation of terms of peace between the Lutheran and Reformed branches of Protestantism with equally little avail. The Spanish monk, Spinola, labored with the same intent, zealously but ineffectually.

In England, Puritanism developed men whose breadth of charity and catholicity of sympathies present a curious and instructive contrast to our ordinary notions of Puritan austerity. Of these, one of the most notable was Stillingfleet,

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

who, in his *Irenicum*, which was first published in 1659 and reprinted in 1662, uttered these sentiments, which need only to be compared with any theological writing contemporary with them, in order to see how free he was from the spirit of belligerent sectarianism which confronted him in England at the time of the Restoration: "For the church to require more than Christ himself did, or make other conditions of her communion than our Saviour did of discipleship, is wholly unwarrantable. What possible reason can be assigned or given why such things should not be sufficient for the church which are sufficient for eternal salvation? And certainly these things are sufficient for that, which are laid down as necessary duties of Christianity by our Lord and Saviour in his Word." The answer to this was the Act of Uniformity which went into effect in England in that same year, 1662, by which the Church of England cut off and cast out its most vital element—Puritanism.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

Richard Baxter, who would be St. Richard if Puritanism canonized its saints, preached and pleaded for unity, early and late, in pulpit and pamphlet and prison. His treatise entitled *The True and Only Way of Concord of all the Christian Churches*, was only one of the many works which he wrote in similar vein. It was Baxter who gave currency to that slogan of true Christian unity, the phrase which had already been coined by Rupertus Meldenius: "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity." Naturally, these sentiments could not find official acceptance in England under the Stuart despotism, for the Stuart theory of church and State was as absolutely repressive of the individual as mediæval Romanism had been. There could be no room for the comprehension of varying individual opinions within a state church with a Stuart at its head. The comprehension schemes therefore failed, and the next resort was a plea for toleration.

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

The development of the idea of religious *toleration* indicates a recognition of the place of individualism in religion, coupled with a scrupulous regard for the preservation of doctrinal uniformity within each sect. The established churches were not ready to take into themselves all manner of heterogeneous elements which were contained in the various dissenting bodies, but they at least came gradually to the recognition of the fact that these dissenting bodies, as the expression of religious life of sincere men, had a right to a more or less free existence.

Dogmatic and divided Protestantism infused with the spirit of toleration, is the last step in the development of individualism considered purely as a disruptive force. Through the activity of the dogmatic temper and the liberty of the individual to revolt, there had grown up many warring parties. The comprehension schemes were an attempt to reunite the parties on some simple basis of common faith. The advocates of toler-

ation proposed to retain the parties but stop the strife. Carried out to its last limits, to the establishment of good-will and co-operation among the several parties, this would have fallen little short of unification. But the early advocates of toleration rather devoted their attention to opposing persecution and governmental oppression of one sect in the interest of another.

Chillingworth, with a spirit akin to that of Stillingfleet, pleaded for toleration under the early Stuarts in these words: "Take away this persecuting, burning, cursing, damning of men for not subscribing to the words of men as the words of God; require of Christians only to believe Christ and to call no man master but Him only; let those leave claiming infallibility who have no title to it, and let them that in their words disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their actions; take away tyranny and restore Christians to the first and full liberty of captivating their understanding to Scripture only, and it may well be

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

hoped, by God's blessing, that universal liberty, thus moderated, may quickly reduce Christendom to truth and unity." Jeremy Taylor's *Liberty of Prophesying*, carries its purport in its title. John Milton, poet, statesman and theologian, was the fearless champion of a restoration of New Testament Christianity and of complete religious toleration; and John Locke, the philosopher, writing his *Letters on Toleration* from Utrecht, whither he had gone to escape the turmoils which immediately preceded and followed the accession of James II., based his argument on the claim that ecclesiastical doctrines (*e. g.*, the Thirty-nine Articles) were of human origin, that no man will be damned for disbelieving them, even if they are true, and that it is therefore ridiculous to persecute those who deny them. As reason is the sole test of truth, so it should be the sole means of conversion. Under the leadership of such men as these, persecution passed away, but the theological warfare continued with undiminished

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

acrimony and on more equal terms.

A third movement which may be coordinated with the comprehension and toleration movements as reactions against the bitterness of religious partisanship, is *latitudinarianism*, as represented by the group of men of the latter part of the seventeenth century, who came to be called the Cambridge Platonists. Platonism emphasizes the universal element—the Idea, as Plato called it—which exists in all individuals as their basis of reality. In like manner, these men of Cambridge maintained that the individual man possesses, in his own reason, a manifestation of the divine mind which puts his rational conclusions beyond the reach of criticism from any other source. The voice of reason is, even more than the Bible, the voice of God. Each man must, therefore, in the language of Archbishop Tillotson, an English prelate and a Platonist, judge every doctrine “by its accordance with those ideas of the divine character which are implanted in man by

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

nature." In its practical workings, this led to a liberal emphasis on natural theology and the relegation to the background of those doctrines of revealed religion which are drawn from the Bible and which, in their various interpretations, are made the ground of sectarian differences. Sacrificing as it did some vital elements of Christianity, by lack of emphasis if not by denial, the latitudinarian movement unfitted itself for making the strongest possible protest against divisive dogmatism.

In view of these movements to which allusion has been made, it may obviously be said that the seventeenth century saw developed many of the painful effects of Protestant individualism and some distinct reactions in the direction either of restoring unity or of removing the most objectionable features of division. But it remained for the eighteenth century to furnish a fully developed philosophical conception of the individual and to apply this in a thorough-going manner to the task of forming a consistent view of

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

the world. There were two movements, begun in the seventeenth century and culminating in the eighteenth, which may be considered as developing the theory of individualism to the last degree and as attempting, along two opposite lines, to find in the individual so defined a basis for social and religious unity. The first was the series of mystical movements including Pietism, Moravianism and Wesleyanism; the second was the philosophy of the Enlightenment in its application to the problems of society, government and religion.

As a result of the persecutions and strifes of the seventeenth century, the church found itself at the beginning of the eighteenth at a low ebb of spiritual vitality. Too weary with its struggles of party against party to continue the fight with any spirit, too much perturbed by attacks from without upon the very foundations of religion to derive much satisfaction from disputing about details, forced by the development of constitutional liberty to grant a governmental

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

toleration which was accompanied by no charity in the heart, too much exhausted to fight and too stubborn to make peace, the church sank from a condition of disgraceful internecine warfare into a still more disgraceful lethargy. The crowning characteristic of the eighteenth century was a lack of enthusiasm.

The most sincerely religious reaction against this state of affairs, which had been brought about by the divisive influence of Protestant dogmatism, was seen in a general movement turning away from all dogmatism and substituting for it a religion of pure feeling. Within the Lutheran communion there arose mystics like Arndt and Jacob Boehme, whose spirit was not unlike that of Tauler and Thomas à Kempis. In France the same motive animated Madame Guyon and Fenelon, to whose Catholic adherents the name of Quietists was applied. Following in the train of these, there arose many mystical sects within both Romanism and Protestantism, their limits being geographical rather than

dogmatic. They made little of church dogmas and insisted on the feeling of the individual as the sole criterion of the religious life. Many of them were degenerates in one way or another and soon ran into fanaticism. Not a few, in revolting against legalism and artificial restraint, became antinomians and fell into gross immorality; but the opprobrium which attaches to these must by no means be transferred to the really great movements which were animated by the same fundamental principle, the appeal to the emotional consciousness of the individual as constituting the highest law and the supreme revelation of God to man.

The Quakers, under the leadership of George Fox, with their doctrine of the "inner light"; Pietism, which roused the Lutheran Church from its stupor and led in a great revival of vital religion and good works; Moravianism, which, under the wise guidance of Count Zinzendorf, gave to the cause of foreign missions such an impulse as it had not

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

received since the days of the apostles; Methodism, which arose in the Church of England and left that communion only when it showed itself unwilling longer to contain the fervid evangelism of Wesley and Whitefield;—all of these movements owed their origin and their strength to the reaction which set in against that dogmatic sectarianism which had divided the religious world, and they were in a large measure successful in developing a side of religion which, before their time, had been too little emphasized. They all alike disregarded (rather than denied) the established dogmas, which represented the inherited opposition to individualism, and made their appeal to feeling, which is something essentially individualistic. Behind them all there lay the implicit assumption that feeling is not only the most individual but the most universal element of human life, and they attempted therefore to get down to the bed-rock of essential religion by effecting a synthesis

of the common elements of religious emotional experience.

The Philosophy of the Enlightenment and its religious phase, Deism, gain a new significance when they are considered as the opposite movement to that just mentioned as regards the methods which they employed, but identical with it in the end to be realized. Deism aimed to establish a universal Christianity through the agency of the Philosophy of the Enlightenment. The warfare of religious parties, it said, is based upon differences of opinion in regard to mysteries whereof the mind of man can have no certain knowledge. Therefore let us cease to speak of these mysteries and dwell only upon those fundamental matters in regard to which we can have knowledge. Christianity is accordingly reduced to a religion of pure reason unassisted by revelation, natural religion takes the place of revealed religion, and all elements are excluded which are not common to all religious systems. Thus the essential

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

and true element in Christianity is reached by an appeal to the consensus of the purely intellectual judgment of men, and the dogmas and alleged historical revelations are at best adventitious and doubtful and must be eliminated from reasonable religion. As Pietism, Wesleyanism, etc., had aimed at unity upon a common emotional element, so the Enlightenment aimed at unity through the universal reason of mankind.

But the philosophical basis upon which the Enlightenment attempted to found its religion of reason was singularly inadequate for that purpose. Its theory of knowledge was sensationalism; i. e., that the raw material for all our knowledge enters the mind in the form of simple ideas through the avenue of the senses. The development of this philosophy from the standpoint of religion is a familiar story. It was, wherever it was logically followed out, the temporary destruction of all religion. Aiming at a reduction of Christianity to

its essentials through a purely intellectual process, it eliminated the mysterious element and ended by eliminating religion.

In England, the movement was not carried to its logical conclusion. There Deism, through the accompanying study of nature and through the corresponding use of the physico-theological argument for the existence of God, kept a firm grip on the conception of God as a personal creative intelligence. But in France the more logical development was followed, leading through pantheism (seen even as early as Toland in England), to hylozoism, and then by the final plunge into sheer materialism and atheism. The demand for a completely clear and distinct view of the world and the determination to refuse to consider anything as true in nature or religion which was not clear and distinct, led, not to a reduction of Christianity to its essentials, which could then be made the basis for a united

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

church, but to the destruction of all Christianity and of all religion.

The Enlightenment was *par excellence* the philosophy of individualism. Disastrous as were its immediate results in the Deism of England and the naturalism of France, it served the purpose of bringing to consciousness, as had never been done before, the fact of the tremendous significance of the individual in every sphere of life. In its practical applications it took the form of revolt against organizations and institutions. It would not tolerate the church because the church brought down traditions from the past and tried to impose them upon the individual of the present. It furnished the animating thought of the French Revolution and of the succeeding revolutionary movements which occurred in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth. It was productive of a disintegrated and atomic condition of society. It therefore prepared the way for a reconstruction and furnished the com-

plete development of the problem of unity.

The problem of Protestantism, the contradiction between the disintegrating tendency of its individualism and the unity which is required for effectiveness and for the preservation of its very existence, has now come clearly to light. Through the long development which we have traced, the individual has been brought to light out of the darkness of mediæval solidarity and has developed into an irrepressible factor of all life and an essential element in every living organization. Simultaneous with this process, has developed the series of attempts to bring this young giant under laws and make him subject to the restrictions of organization. The attempts have not been completely successful. This young giant, the modern Individual, stands forth in all his might, free, uncontrolled, and his power in large measure wasted for lack of effective organization. It becomes the problem of the nineteenth century to effect a syn-

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

thesis between these two apparently contradictory principles,—to preserve the freedom of the individual untrammelled by useless machinery and unoppressed by musty traditions inherited from an outlived past; and at the same time to bring this individual into such working relations with his fellows as to make him most efficient.

The task of philosophy in the nineteenth century may be described in the most general terms as an attempt to transcend the individualism which was developed by the eighteenth; *i. e.*, to use it, to control it, to pass beyond it to a unity which shall embody but shall not crush it.

The problem of the religious world at the opening of the nineteenth century was a similar one. Protestant individualism had been fully developed on the side of division and separation. That this could not be endured as a permanent condition was evidenced by the many unsuccessful attempts to restore unity. The conditions of the problem

and the need of a solution have now been brought clearly to light. The need of the hour was for the discovery of a principle of synthesis by which, without restricting the liberty of any man, a practical and effective union of religious forces might be obtained. The problem was to transcend religious individualism by finding a basis for religious solidarity.

The whole history of Protestantism had been a continual demonstration of the impossibility of uniting on the basis of a complete theology, even a professedly Biblical theology. The exercise of the right of private judgment is a guarantee that there will always be many differences of opinion as to what the Bible teaches upon certain points of doctrine. The attempt to reduce Christianity to its simplest and purest form by emphasis upon the feeling of the individual as the criterion of religion, had quickened and enthused the church but had contributed little to the solution of the problem of unity. Equally unsuc-

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

cessful, and far more disastrous, had been the opposite attempt to get at the essentials of Christianity by a process of pure reason, based on a theory of knowledge the foundation of which was the sense perception of the individual. The significance of Alexander Campbell's contribution to the question of Christian union is that he took the matter up just at this point and proposed another principle of union. The unity of the church is to be based, not upon a complete system of Biblical or dogmatic theology, nor upon anything which is to be found within the individual himself; but upon the authority of Christ and the terms which he has laid down as the conditions of salvation.

Mr. Campbell frequently spoke of his movement as an attempt to secure union "upon the Bible," but it was evident from the whole course of his thought that this did not mean union upon his interpretation of the teaching of the Bible on every point of Christian doctrine. The latter would have been sim-

ply a reaffirmation of the old dictum that "the Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants." It was rather Mr. Campbell's idea that the Bible is to be taken as the authority for determining what is essential in Christianity. But the whole Bible is not taken up with depicting original and essential Christianity. Therefore the real basis of unity is not the entire Biblical teaching upon all points, about many of which there would be differences of interpretation, but the practice of the early church under the guidance of the apostles, as representing the authority of Christ. The question to be answered is, What did the apostles, taught by Christ, consider the essentials of a church?

This distinction between union on the Bible, in the sense of union on all the doctrines which each individual conceives to be taught in the Bible, and union on the Bible, in the sense of union on the Biblical statements regarding the essentials of Christianity, is an impor-

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

tant one to bear in mind, as it helps to define the position which Mr. Campbell's theology occupied in his general scheme of thought. His theology was his interpretation of the teaching of Scripture on a great many points, and it shows the influence of some contemporary systems of theology and philosophy. But he did not make his theology his basis for union. For example, he conceived that faith, repentance and baptism were essentials of Christianity, and were therefore included in the basis of union. But his interpretation of the nature of faith, the manner in which the Holy Spirit operates in conversion, and the design of baptism in the scheme of redemption, were parts of his theology which he taught as truths but did not erect into tests of fellowship.

While his whole movement was a revolt against the results of eighteenth century individualism, as manifested in the condition of Christendom as divided into innumerable sects, Mr. Campbell revolted also no less against its method,

namely, the self-dependence of the individual in matters of religion. He concurred with the general movement of the eighteenth century in desiring a reduction of Christianity to its essential elements, but he differed from it in asserting that Christianity could never be reduced to its essential elements through the exercise of the unaided human reason, or through dependence upon the emotions of man. There must be necessarily a return to authority for the establishment of the essential basis of religion. The unity, therefore, comes not from within, but from without. Given the individual as defined according to Locke's philosophy, and there can be within him no universal element to serve as a basis of unity or as a means of attaining such a basis.

Stated in his own terms then, Mr. Campbell's movement would be defined as an attempt to unite Christendom by a restoration of the essential elements of primitive Christianity as defined by the Scriptures. He was strongly of the

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

opinion that nobody before had ever seriously attempted such a restoration on such a basis. All previous sects and dissenting bodies had been built on creeds and confessions with only a nominal, or, if real, a short-lived, return to the authority of Scripture. He recognized the fact, it is true, that there had been a few scattered individuals, through the two centuries which preceded his work, who had grasped this idea, but there had never yet been any serious attempt to apply the principle to the solution of the problem. "Not until within the present generation," says Mr. Campbell, "did any sect or party in Christendom unite and build upon the Bible alone. Since that time the first effort known to us, to abandon the whole controversy about creeds and reformations and to restore primitive Christianity, or to build alone upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself the chief corner stone, has been made." Attempts had been made, to be sure, to deduce from the Scriptures complete systems of the-

ology, and to make these the bases of successive reformations of the church. But his own movement differed from these in seeking for the authoritatively given conditions of salvation and making these alone, as the essentials of Christianity, the basis for the unity of the Church. There may be differences of theory about the facts of the Gospel, but the facts themselves are sure. There may be differences of interpretation in regard to many doctrines taught in the Bible, but, when all prejudices and preconceived opinions have been set aside, there is little room for differences in regard to the few simple commands, obedience to which was the only condition of entrance to the church in the days of the apostles.

Stated in a word, his method of effecting the reconciliation between the liberty of the individual and the unity of the whole body, was a return to authority for essentials and the admission of individual differences in non-essentials.

CHAPTER II
The Philosophical Basis

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS.

I. DESCARTES AND LOCKE :

1. Descartes—clearness and distinctness as criterion of truth; doctrine of innate ideas.
2. Locke—no innate ideas; turns philosophy from metaphysics to theory of knowledge.

II. LOCKE'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE—SENSATIONALISM :

1. Ideas come only through sensation and reflection.
2. Simple and complex ideas.
3. Primary qualities represent an objective reality like the impression; secondary do not.
4. Substance is unknowable, since only qualities make impressions.
5. Law of causation.

III. DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF SENSATIONALISM :

1. In metaphysics, Berkeley's idealism; in theory of knowledge, Hume's agnosticism; reaction, Scottish philosophy.
2. Natural science: mechanical view of nature.
3. Religion: Deism.
4. Ethics: hedonism and utilitarianism.

IV. CAMPBELL'S RELATION TO THE LOCKIAN PHILOSOPHY.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

The period of philosophy out of which Alexander Campbell's thought sprang may be denominated as the second period of modern philosophy. Descartes had struck the note of philosophical individualism which was at once the expression of the Protestant principle and the dominant feature of modern philosophy from Descartes to Kant. When, at the beginning of his *Meditations*, Descartes announced his intention to cut loose from all received and established beliefs and, starting from a doubt as nearly universal as possible, to establish everything over again for himself, or, failing in this, to reject it, he gave expression to this vital essence of Protestantism and modern philosophy. "Clearness and distinctness" was the criterion of truth which he proposed. What is clear and distinct to me I will accept as

truth, and no authority can force me to admit anything which does not so accredit itself. But fearing that this complete individualism might destroy the claim of religious faith to universal validity, Descartes maintained that there are certain *innate ideas* which all men possess in common. These form the bond of unity between individuals which, as defined by him, have nothing else to hold them together.

It was this sort of an isolated individual, resolved that his world of knowledge should stand or fall according to the power or impotence of his own unaided faculties, in whom Locke tried to find the basis for relations between men. But since much that Locke called "metaphysical rubbish" had justified itself by appealing to Descartes's "innate ideas," Locke resolved to sweep these away and go to the last extreme of individualism by adding pure empiricism to the criterion of "clearness and distinctness."

From the time of Locke, philosophy became introspective. It not only re-

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

jected everything which could not be made clear and distinct to the individual mind, but it turned its attention to the consideration of this individual mind as a knowing organ. Locke's starting point was his discovery, which seems to have come to him like a rising sun, that, before questions of metaphysics, principles of morality or revealed religion could be rightly investigated, it would be necessary to discuss the nature and limitations of human knowledge. It was to this task that he set himself in his chief work, and it was this which struck the key-note for the philosophy of the following century. The dominant problems of that philosophy are, "How does knowledge arise?" "What is its possible extent?" and "What are its necessary limitations?"

The theory of knowledge which was developed in answer to these questions determined the metaphysics, ethics and philosophy of religion for the period. Not infrequently does a poet of keen insight express the leading thought of the

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

contemporary philosophy, and Alexander Pope summed up this tendency of eighteenth century thought very accurately in the couplet:

“ Know then thyself; presume not God to scan.
The proper study of mankind is man.”

Only by the study of man can the extent and validity of his knowing processes be determined and the means discovered by which knowledge can defend itself against the attacks of skepticism. As a matter of fact, the study of man's knowing processes by Locke and his followers did not succeed in proving the validity of knowledge or in warding off the assaults of skepticism. Its failure to do this characterizes it as a destructive period, but, as destructive, it was also preparatory. For in showing the inadequacy of the old conception of the individual and his relations to the world, it opened the way for a higher conception which would admit the possibility of the completer synthesis for which these thinkers sought in vain.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

In consideration of the immense importance of the thought of Locke in connection with the theology which we are discussing, it will be necessary to give a brief survey of the chief features of his philosophy.

In the preface to his *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Locke gives an account of the circumstances which led him to the consideration of the problems which he there discusses. In considering, with a party of friends, the standard and sanctions of morality, he found himself brought to a stand by his inadequate apprehension of the power of the human intellect to know the truth. He therefore turned to the study of the mind as an instrument of knowledge. The practical impulse which led to this discussion must be kept in mind as indicating one characteristic of Locke's thought, namely, its practical character and the immediacy of its application to questions of morals and religion.

The most conspicuous and familiar feature of Locke's theory of knowledge,

is his doctrine of the source of ideas. All knowledge comes from sensation and reflection. There are no ideas innate in the human mind, not even the ideas of God, or the law of cause and effect, or the axioms of mathematics. Things exist external to us; man has a capacity for receiving impressions and a faculty of combining and comparing these impressions, and he has nothing more. All knowledge comes from the reception of images of these external objects upon the blank tablet of the mind. The standard of truth is therefore entirely external. We know objects if the ideas of them which we receive through sensation correspond to the external reality which is the cause of the impression. The impressions which we receive, just in the form in which we receive them, give us simple ideas in which there is no admixture of anything but sensation. But by comparing, repeating and contrasting these, we may form complex ideas; yet at the end of the process we have no more than we started with, so

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

far as the material of knowledge goes, for the product contains only what was given in the original impression. The validity of knowledge is therefore directly dependent upon the trustworthiness of the report which the senses bring to us regarding the external objects which stimulate them.

Yet Locke admits that the senses in a measure deceive us. The greater part of our sensations are not copies at all of externally existing realities. The qualities which we know through sensation, are divided into two classes. There are *primary* qualities, such as extension, form, solidity, mobility, which are necessarily connected with the conception of an object and which really exist in external things just as we perceive them. But *secondary* qualities, like color, sound, smell, are only the ways in which corresponding external conditions affect us. The redness, for example, is not in the object, but in the perceiving subject. There is in the object only a certain condition which produces in the subject

the sensation of redness, but which is by no means like it. Secondary qualities are, therefore, not really qualities at all, but sensations. In this doctrine of the subjective character of secondary qualities, we have the first premonitory hint of the skepticism which would later be developed out of the system; but Locke did not so interpret it. We get our knowledge only from sensations, but sensation does not always tell us a straight story about our experiences. It produces the impression that certain (secondary) qualities exist without and independent of us, whereas these so-called qualities are only the way in which we are affected by the object. Locke's successors ask, "How do you know that primary qualities exist just as your sensations say they do, if you admit that secondary qualities do not so exist?" The system of Locke contains no answer for this dilemma, but Locke guards himself by carefully maintaining the distinction between the two classes of qualities.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

Again in his idea of substance, Locke opens another door to the wave of skepticism which was only too ready to sweep in and overwhelm the confiding philosopher in the citadel of his own system. Since our knowledge comes only through impressions, we cannot have any direct knowledge of substance, but only of qualities, for substance itself, apart from qualities, cannot make any impression upon our organs of sense. The idea of substance, therefore, is simply a combination of various simple ideas which we habitually receive together. For example, the substance of the object which we call a table, is just a combination of the particular qualities which are represented to us through certain sensations of hardness, form, color, etc. When metaphysics tries to get below these and inquire for the substrate in which these qualities inhere, the human understanding has transgressed its limits. Thus, again, the outer world is rendered apparently less substantial than it appears to the naive mind, or

than it was according to the metaphysics of the scholastics or of Descartes.

Cause is also a complex idea which comes from the observation of repeated changes of things owing to the action of other things upon them. We observe repeatedly that a certain act or occurrence is followed or accompanied by another certain occurrence, and we assume that the first produces the second. For example, if you drop a book, a noise follows; if you pinch your arm, there is a feeling of pain. We assume the relation of cause and effect to account for phenomena, which are presented to our senses only as unvarying coincidences. This was the ground from which Hume started for the development of his skepticism by perfectly logical steps.

On this purely sensational theory of knowledge, evidently all our knowledge must be of particular things. The universal, species, genus, etc., are the product of our mental activity, abstracting the distinctive qualities of each object, and generalizing the qualities common

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

to a number of objects. It follows also that our knowledge really reaches only to the perception of the relation of agreement or disagreement between our ideas. We take our simple ideas as valid representatives of some sort of external reality because they come to us independent of our activity, and hence we may assume that they are caused from without, but this involves an assumption which is not susceptible of proof. But we know our own existence immediately, says Locke, though we have no metaphysical knowledge of the essence of the soul, and we have a demonstrable knowledge of the existence of God, proven by a modified form of the cosmological argument, although we cannot know His essence any more than our own. These two facts constitute the highest points of our knowledge.

The establishment of all knowledge upon this basis of mere sensation and the rejection of all knowledge which cannot be so grounded, the removal of innate ideas from the sphere of valid

knowledge, and especially from the realm of ethics, were the instrument for the "clearing up" of ethical ideas and the setting aside of all those fanatical and antinomian notions which had been supported by the undemonstrable but irrefutable argument: "I feel it so within me; I have it as an innate idea." All ideas, whether ethical or religious, must obtain the sanction of the understanding operating through sensation or reflection. This is the starting-point for the *Aufklärung*, or Enlightenment, in the realm of ethics, and it was this which furnished the practical motive for Locke's formulation of his theory of knowledge.

The outcome of this limitation of knowledge to the materials received through sensation was, as we have seen, and as is perfectly well known in the history of philosophy, the theory of knowledge known as sensationalism, an empirical theory, according to which knowledge cannot logically be extended beyond the cognition of particular im-

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

pressions derived from particular phenomena. In Locke's own mind, this system was without serious revolutionary consequences. With him it was merely an altogether admirable means of ridding the realm of philosophy of a series of problems with which it was not competent to deal, and of clearing up our ideas about such objects as we could really know. For him there was in it no subversion of existing and orthodox theories of morals or religion. It was only in the hands of his successors, who adopted the principles which he had announced and carried them out to a more logical conclusion, that the serious results of the system are seen. There are four lines of development which may be traced from Locke's thought in regard to the source and nature of knowledge. These were found in the application of his principles to a further development of the theory of knowledge, to natural science, to religion, and to ethics. In each one of these fields the results reached were of an extreme

and revolutionary character, such as would have startled and shocked the devout philosopher who was really responsible for their origination.

1. The first development of the *theory of knowledge* beyond the point at which Locke left it, came through the thought of Berkeley. Taking up Locke's conception of secondary qualities, which are not objective but which represent the way in which certain external conditions affect our sensibilities, and the corresponding idea that substance is something beyond the reach of our knowing faculties, Berkeley asked the very natural question, How can we tell that the case is not the same with regard to the primary qualities as with the secondary? And since we cannot perceive substance through impressions, what is our guarantee for the real existence of substance? And if primary qualities, secondary qualities, and substance are all made merely subjective affections, what is there left of reality outside of us? Berkeley answered these

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

questions by denying that there is any guarantee for any such objective material existence. But the idea of cause still holds good with Berkeley, and there must be something to explain the rise of the ideas in our minds. This is done by referring them to the direct activity of God. There is no external reality except the Deity. The result is a system of absolute idealism, or spiritual monism.

One-half of the external universe was therefore annihilated by Berkeley; the other half was annihilated by Hume, who attacked the conception of causation as without real validity, and consequently left no more ground for the acceptance of an external spiritual reality as cause for our ideas, than Berkeley had seen for an external material reality. Hume's aim, like Locke's, has been "a serious inquiry into the nature of human understanding" to clear away the rubbish of old metaphysics. He calls himself a skeptic, and it is by this name that he has been generally characterized.

But his conclusions were simply a logical development from the philosophical basis which Locke gave in his empiricism and sensationalism. If we have no knowledge except such as comes to us through sensuous impressions, certainly we have no demonstrable knowledge of any cause for these impressions, either material or spiritual. If the outcome of this is not palatable, we must not blame Hume but the originator of the principles which Hume developed.

As the strictly philosophical reaction against the extreme conclusions which Hume reached in his skeptical philosophy came the so-called Scottish philosophy, led by Reid. It was the anti-religious and anti-theological aspect of Hume's results which aroused Reid to his revolt. Hume's conclusion had been that, since we know only our impressions and have neither a guarantee for the validity of these as relating to external realities, nor any valid principle for connecting them, knowledge of reality vanishes. Reid admitted skepticism

as the logical outcome from Locke's psychological principle, sensationalism. It was in the field of psychology, therefore, that he found the battle, and it was there that he fought it out. He adopted as his principle a thorough inductive study of the facts of the mental life. All that is found to be the actual product of the mind's activity is considered self-evident and necessarily true. For example, since the idea of causation actually exists in the human mind, it must be objectively valid. This is one of the axioms which cannot be proven, but the validity of which is testified to by the universal consciousness of mankind. It is the "common-sense" of men—the *consensus gentium*—which constitutes the sole criterion of the validity of knowledge, and which furnishes the connecting link between our subjective states and the external reality which gives value to them. The introduction of this momentous assumption, without proof, is what Kant calls "dogmatism." Before beginning his answer to Hume, Reid goes over the

whole development of the system which he intends to oppose from Descartes to Hume, summing it all up under the name of Cartesianism. He treats of it as the "ideal system" or "theory of ideas," because it makes ideas, instead of reality itself, the object of our knowledge, and furnishes no satisfactory way of getting over from the one to the other. Reid's opposition to this system was the expression of a devout conservatism which shrank from allowing the highest realities of life to be swallowed up in a maze of mere impressions without reality and without connection. Its impulse was good, but it rested upon a feeble and tottering philosophical basis, as was soon shown by Kant. Nevertheless, it was useful in tiding over the period of negation which resulted from the development of skepticism, and it further furnished valuable contributions to ethics and to empirical psychology.

2. The same principles upon which Berkeley developed his idealistic metaphysics and Hume his skeptical theory

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

of knowledge, were applied directly to *natural science* and to the phenomena of the mind, by Newton and Hartley respectively. It is Newton who ushers in the modern era of science, the characteristic of which is the study of nature as a system of forces. His great principle was: "Abandon substantial forms and occult qualities and reduce natural phenomena to mathematical laws." This idea of rejecting the consideration of substance or substrate and observing only qualities, is plainly Lockian. The only thing to be considered in nature is the perceivable things as they affect our senses, and these are to be estimated with mathematical exactness and reduced to law and rule. The outcome of this was a purely mechanical view of nature. Although a profoundly devout man himself, Newton saw no place for God within his mechanically constructed and perfectly running universe. The only possible place for God in such a world is at the beginning. Newton derives a physico-theological argument for

the existence and perfection of God, from the fact that the universe is so perfectly constructed that it now runs, and has been running ever since its creation, without any interference from God and without the introduction of any forces other than those which he describes and estimates as natural laws.

This mechanical theory, which worked with such beautiful perfection, especially in an age when science took little account of the more intricate problems of biology, was naturally transferred from the science of nature to the science of mind. Mental as well as material phenomena were considered as being explicable according to laws which could be mathematically determined. Here again it was the pious conviction of those who carried out this line of thought, that religion would be not only not interfered with by it, but even assisted, for faith in God being an actual fact in the mind, would thereby receive the support of positive demonstration. But, in spite of their excellent inten-

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

tions, the purport of their system is very obvious. It was a long stride in the direction of absolute materialism and needed only another application of rigorous logic, which it took a Frenchman to give, to bring it to that conclusion.

3. The application of the principles of the Enlightenment, that is, of Locke's philosophy, to *religion*, produced Deism. It was a rationalistic, naturalistic, critical attempt to get at the essence of religion, and especially of Christianity, by reducing it to a system which the human intellect, as defined by Locke, could grasp in its entirety and in all its details. It would tolerate no mystery. It would permit no dark place to remain unilluminated, and no difficulty unsolved. All must be "clear and distinct"; otherwise it could not be known to be true. Locke, as the apostle of clearness and the founder of the English Enlightenment, became thus unintentionally the corner-stone of Deism. The inquiry into the limits and extent of knowledge, which started with

a view to clearing away the tottering yet dogmatically affirmed speculations of pseudo-knowledge and ended by clearing away everything which did not attest its validity by the testimony of the senses, was, if the premises were granted, the legitimate basis for a clearing away of all positive religion. Accordingly, the Deists set out to uproot every tenet, dogmatic or historical, which did not agree with reason so defined.

It was only gradually that the significance of this attempt and the principles upon which it rested came to light. As the passion for clearness and distinctness of knowledge increased, permitting nothing to be accepted which could not be proved to reason; and, as the development of the theory of knowledge by Berkeley and Hume showed more and more the impotence of the human reason to know reality of any sort, Deism became more and more destructive of all that had been held religiously sacred. At first accepting the possibility and

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

actuality of divine revelation, they soon rejected those parts of revealed religion which seemed unreasonable according to their sensational empiricism. Soon religion became purely ethical, with the single article of faith, "Believe in God," and the single precept, "Do your duty." Everything more than this in religion is false and harmful.

A variety of causes which had been long in operation produced a conception of God as a transcendent and supramundane Being who set the universe going in the beginning and then left it. The operation of natural forces was interpreted as evidence of God's absence, rather than his presence. God could come into the world again only by breaking in as an intruder, defying natural law and throwing the universe into temporary disorder. When revealed religion was conceived to be dependent upon miracles, which were interpreted as divine incursions into a world which had no place for God in its normal order, it was but natural that those who attached

great importance to the mechanical theory of the universe and the perfect orderliness of its workings, should find themselves inclined to discredit revealed religion. The Enlightenment favored rather "natural religion" and "natural theology," which argued glibly from the constitution of nature to the existence of God, but realized no present and vital connection between God and the world. This is the stage of the development to which the name Deism most accurately applies. This was the stage at which in general English deistic thought stopped, but it stopped only when it became evident that to go farther involved the final plunge into atheism.

It was Hume, skeptic though he was, and by the very fact of his skepticism, who brought Deism to its culmination and thereby wrought its overthrow. The destruction of the rational arguments for the existence of God as conceived by all thinkers of this time, on the Lockian basis, left no stopping point short of rejection of belief in God, which

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

might be atheism or might be only agnosticism. Logical rigidity is not the prevailing characteristic of English philosophy in general, and in this case practical considerations outweighed the desire for consistency. It had been shown through the development of Locke's theory of knowledge into skepticism, and through the application of this to science and to religion, that upon this philosophical basis there could be no outcome except a purely negative one. There seemed to be no other basis to fall back upon. But, whether logical or not, the English mind refuses to rest in negation. There must be a reconstruction of some sort to meet the practical demands of life. The Scottish philosophy of Reid and his successors had been an attempt at this, practically useful in many ways but theoretically a failure. The other attempt to avoid the issue in pure negation came through the ethical thought of the century.

4. The development of *moral philosophy* in the eighteenth century was a

struggle for the independence of ethics, as Deism was a struggle for independence of religion. Hobbes had aimed to emancipate morals from ecclesiastical domination by giving Right a different definition than that which had been commonly accepted, namely, the will of God. But he effected merely an exchange of masters, for in freeing ethics from the control of religion, he subjected it to the state. The individual has surrendered his rights to the sovereign, and henceforth the will of the sovereign constitutes the right and disobedience to the sovereign constitutes wrong. Even here there is an implicit ethical individualism, for the original source for the sovereign's authority to declare what is right is in the individuals who have surrendered their rights to him. The course of ethical thought during the century had for its aim the discovery of a system in which the individual man would be not only the source but the unit of all moral judgments.

Locke himself laid strong emphasis on

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

the conception of law as constituting the authority in morals, but the enforcement of the law, whether of God, the state, or public opinion, depends on the individual's anticipation of pleasure or pain to be derived from the contemplated course of action. A sensational theory of knowledge is naturally and logically accompanied by a hedonistic theory of ethics, and in so far Locke's ethical theory was the logical outcome of his philosophy. The same feature is seen throughout the century in varying forms in various ethical systems. The return is always to the individual. His pains and his pleasures are the ultimate source of ethical control. With Shaftesbury, this individualism appears in its least objectionable form, disguised by a halo of "enthusiasm for society"; but even here there is still an individualistic reference in the final insistence upon this enthusiasm for society as not really an end in itself, but as a means whereby the individual will attain his highest happiness. At the same time, Shaftesbury criticises

positive Christianity on the ground that it degrades virtue by making it the price of future eternal happiness. Yet his own system, when rigidly interpreted, simply substitutes present and immediate happiness for a far-away state of eternal bliss as the reward for virtue. Hume was a thorough and outspoken empiricist in morals, making all conduct depend upon the passions, which operate mechanically under the stimuli of pleasure and pain. Passing over the numerous other representatives of this classical period of English ethical theory, who, in varying degree and in various forms, give expression to these same principles of hedonism as the motive and sensation-alism as the means of apprehending ethical ideas, all of which is traceable back to Locke—we may mention, finally, Paley as the culmination of the whole movement.

Paley's ethical system can be condensed into a single sentence. It is: to do good to one's neighbor, in obedience to the will of God, in the hope of an

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

eternal reward. The elements of this are so apparent that it scarcely needs analysis: the revealed will of God as authority in ethics, and a thorough utilitarianism, the content of which is benevolent action, but the motive to which is unadulterated egoism. Such a system as this might satisfy the practical demands for some sort of control of conduct. In a transition stage, when the philosophical basis was being proved adequate, this might be useful as an expression of the common-sense of mankind as applied to the problems of conduct. It is an ethics of good order, good citizenship and general respectability, and is such a system as might naturally be formulated by a man of the world intent only on laying down practical rules for the control of overt acts. The trouble with it was that the element of morality was lacking, just as the element of religion was lacking in the final outcome of deistic thought which had started in to reduce religion to its essential elements. In both cases, the most essential element,

the very essence itself, had been eliminated.

The difference between the two was that while irreligious deism obviously led the way to all kinds of negative and destructive thought, the non-moral ethics of egoistic hedonism appeared to lead to nothing worse than itself, and to be in itself a system which, if not theoretically admirable, was at least practically workable. It was the ethics of Paley which was dominant in all English and American universities at the beginning of the present century, and which is most thoroughly representative of the condition of ethical theory at that time.

These are the general features of the philosophical movements of the eighteenth century; a theory of knowledge, at the beginning individualistic and sensationalistic, and at the end skeptical, not to say agnostic; an application of this to natural science resulting in a rigidly mechanical explanation of all phenomena, both material and mental; an application to religion, ending in the

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

destruction of religion upon the accepted presuppositions; an application to ethics to solve the problem—given an individual as defined by Locke, how can you get him into working relations with others so as to form society, and how explain and validate the laws which govern his conduct as a member of society?—ending in an egoistic utilitarianism from which the element of morality was excluded. The general aspect of the field is not a pleasing one, and the positive results seem to be slight and valueless. They are to be valued rather as a process of clearing the ground and of getting the problem more definitely present in consciousness. Obviously, the philosophical need was for a new conception of the individual which might serve as a basis for the reconstruction of ethics, religion and science, such as was impossible upon the basis of Locke's philosophy.

It may be proper here to consider briefly the points of contact which appear between Mr. Campbell's thought

and the philosophy of the Enlightenment as we have here outlined it. It is important to observe in the first place, that he read Locke's works early in life, adopted his system of philosophy, and ever afterward continued to hold it. His biographer, Richardson, says that even before he entered the University, "he learned greatly to admire the character and works of John Locke, whose Letters on Toleration seem to have fixed his ideas of religious and of civil liberty." At the same time he studied also the Essay on Human Understanding, and made the theory which it presents the basis of all his future philosophizing.

As for Mr. Campbell's relation to the philosophy of the eighteenth century, we can say that he reacted against the results which it developed, but accepted in the main the principles upon which it was based. His method, therefore, in so far as he had a philosophical method in his thinking, was the method of the Enlightenment. This characteristic he had in common with most of

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

the theologians and apologists of his time and of the generation or two preceding, who tried to stem the tide of infidelity and skepticism which came with the development of Deism. This double attitude, the rejection of the results and the acceptance of the method, is shown in his attitude toward Deism and the criticisms which he passes upon it. Speaking of the reliance of the deists upon pure reason, and their consideration of this as sufficient to account for natural religion, he refers to "the acknowledged principles of Locke" as contradicting them. Again he says: "Are not all of our ideas the result of sensation and reflection?" (*Christian Baptist*, p. 271).

It was the inconsistency of the deists, in accepting Locke's theory of knowledge and then claiming to be able to know God by the reason, which especially called forth his criticism. "These truths, then, (God, human soul, heaven, etc.,) however deists may boast, are all borrowed from the Bible, hence there is

not a rational deist in the universe. . . . They are the poorest, driveling philosophers that ever assumed the name." Again: "Either unqualified atheism, or faith in Jesus as the Son of God (*i. e.*, knowledge of spiritual things through revelation) are the legitimate stopping places on principles of sound reasoning and good logic. All that halt between these extremes are besotted with brutish stupidity. The ox and the ass are their reprovers."

This is precisely in line with what Hume and the French exponents of naturalism had shown, that, given such a reason as lay at the basis of Locke's system, and the principles of sound reasoning and good logic will not allow one to stop short of the final abyss of atheism. This result, which had been accepted as final by such Frenchmen as Diderot and D'Alembert, was for Campbell only a *reductio ad absurdum*, so a fresh start must be taken to avoid this downward path. The start is made again with Locke, but the principles

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

which Locke laid down as to the limitation of knowledge are now applied subject to an important condition. It is not all knowledge that comes from sensation and reflection, but only knowledge of natural or material things. It is seen, therefore, that there is a division in the field of knowledge. Natural things, such as have impressions corresponding to them, are known through ordinary sensation; spiritual things are known only by divine revelation. Revelation, to be sure, operates through the senses, but it opens up to the senses a field which is entirely closed to the natural reason.

In general, on the application of philosophical method in religion and theology, Campbell was averse to speculation, just as the philosophy of the Enlightenment had been averse to speculation and had rather pinned its faith to the observation of fact and the noting of the items of sensuous experience. He says: "Speculation in philosophy has been widely discarded from approved systems.

Since the days of Bacon, our scientific men have adopted the practical and truly scientific mode—that is, they have stopped where human intellect found a bound over which it could not pass, and have been content to go no farther than material objects, analyzed, gave out their qualities and left the manner of their existence as beyond the bounds of created intellect. We plead for the same principle in the contemplation of religious truth. . . . So religious truth is to be deduced from the revelations which the Deity has been pleased to give to man.” Here it will be observed that it is taken for granted that the inductive method of Bacon and the Lockian theory of knowledge are the end and consummation of philosophical method.

Closely connected with this horror of speculation is Mr. Campbell’s conviction of the worthlessness of creeds for religious and ecclesiastical life, since they are concerned, not with the actual and vital facts of religion, but with the deduction of theories about those facts. This, he

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

says, is an intrusion of the puny powers of man's intellect into a realm which it is not competent to handle, and concerning which it has not pleased God to reveal to us the reality.

So much for the similarity of Mr. Campbell's general point of view and method to the method of Locke's philosophy. When we come to the consideration of his particular doctrines, it will appear that the influence of the Lockian philosophy is no less marked in the details than in the general character of his thought. Aside from the points of contact which have already been noted, there may be mentioned here in a preliminary way, three particulars in which this influence of the philosophical presupposition is especially apparent: 1. The limitation of man's natural knowledge to sensuous things and the entire dependence upon revelation for knowledge of God and spiritual things generally, with which is connected his view of inspiration and authority, and the way in which these act upon men.

2. The nature of faith and its relation to repentance, involving the general question of the relation of the intellect to the will. 3. The nature and instruments of conversion, especially the doctrine of the influence of the Holy Spirit only through the written Word.

CHAPTER III
Theological Heritage

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE.

- I. THEOLOGY OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT:
 1. Deism and orthodox apologetics.
 2. Character of triumphant orthodoxy.
- II. DEFECTS OF SCHOLASTIC CALVINISM:
 1. Lacked idea of development.
 2. Used the Bible unintelligently.
 3. Failed to recognize individual responsibility.
- III. COVENANT THEOLOGY SUPPLIED THESE DEFECTS:
 1. Distinction between dispensations.
 2. New method of exegesis.
 3. Covenant idea—man's part in salvation.
- IV. INFLUENCE OF COVENANT THEOLOGY:
 1. In Holland—never became a sect.
 2. In England—Neonomians and Antinomians.
 3. In Scotland—relaxation of Calvinism in established church; dispensation idea among Seceders.
- V. INFLUENCE ON CAMPBELL:
 1. His contact with it.
 2. Points of similarity.
 3. His attitude toward his sources.
- VI. SUMMARY OF PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL INFLUENCES.

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE.

Two streams of influence united to determine the theology of the latter part of the eighteenth century. First, the theology of the English Enlightenment, based directly on the principles of Locke's philosophy and finding its chief activity in defending Christianity against the assaults of Deism; a theology which ran largely to apologetics, which had at its core the Puritan conception of a transcendent God, which laid emphasis chiefly upon God's activity as a creative intelligence who made the universe in the beginning and whose existence can be demonstrated by arguments drawn from the constitution of nature; a theology which, while it held the Bible in almost superstitious reverence, gloried especially in its ability to prove, by the arguments of natural theology, the reasonableness of Christianity as delivered

in the Scriptures. Second, a line of theological development which had its origin on the continent, partly in the warfare of Scholastic Protestantism in the attack and defense of Calvinism, and partly in the reaction against the conditions which that warfare produced.

The philosophy of Locke was as determinative for English theology in the eighteenth century as it was for the strictly philosophical thought of the same period. The emancipation of philosophy from its mediæval bondage to the church and to theology had made, with Descartes, the beginning of a new epoch in philosophy. Casting aside the mass of traditions, ecclesiastical dogmas and received beliefs with which every speculator was supposed to begin, Descartes proposed to start from the standpoint of a doubt as nearly universal as possible. Naturally the doubt extended itself to the sphere of theology and to the fundamental truths of religion, and the individual doubter did not always mount up from the depths of his doubt

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

on the wings of a higher certainty, with as great facility as the originator of the method had done. The relation of dependence between philosophy and theology was reversed, and "rational theology" came into favor.

Locke's philosophy was epoch making, as we have seen, because it sowed the seeds for a negative development in all the departments of thought to which it was applied. As in the theory of knowledge, metaphysics and ethics, so in theology. The deistic movement, which was noticed in the preceding chapter on the eighteenth century philosophy, might, with equal appropriateness have been classed here, for Deism was one side of the theology of the Enlightenment. It was that side which professed to find in the current philosophy a basis for rational belief in the existence of God and the moral order of the world, entirely apart from any supernatural revelation, but did not find any rational proof of the truth of the Christian revelation.

The other side of the theology of the Enlightenment was represented by the apologists for positive Christianity. Both the deists and the apologists proceeded upon the principles of the *Aufklärung*, the yearning after clearness and exactness of knowledge, proofs, demonstrations and explanations. Both made their appeal to the constitution of nature as the foundation of man's knowledge of God, and both based their knowledge of nature upon the testimony of the senses. The idea of God, which is the real measure of any theology, was much the same with both deists and apologists. Both conceived of God as a creative intelligence who had been present and active at the formation of the world, and had then turned it over to the operation of natural law and had retired into infinite space. Any subsequent return of God to reveal himself or control the course of affairs on earth, is really an interruption of the normal and orderly operation of natural laws. The deists maintained that it could not

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

be proved that such interruptions had ever occurred; the apologists maintained that it could.

The struggle which ensued between these two positions was a battle of giants. It dwarfed into significance every other theological controversy of the time. The deists were at the obvious disadvantage of being attacked in both front and rear. The apologists asserted that more could be proved than they were willing to admit, while the followers of Hume and the representatives of French Naturalism maintained that not even the existence of God could be established on the basis of sensationism which they all occupied. The deists were on a slippery incline, the tendency of which was constantly to precipitate them to lower depths. In the heat of the conflict they were forced to occupy lower and lower ground, *i. e.*, to carry their own presuppositions nearer to their logical conclusion to get firm ground beneath their feet, and their position thereby became the more repul-

sive to the conservative English mind, which cares more for results than for logic. Yet there was an important branch of Deism in England which long continued to be the supporter of practical righteousness. Even after the *reductio ad absurdum* in sheer atheism, it shared the conservatism of its opponents who were willing to sacrifice logical consistency to the interests of religion and morality. So its adherents clung to their shadowy idea of a far-away God who will in some undefined way be honored by a virtuous life, and will by some equally mysterious means reward righteousness and punish sin. It reduced itself practically to the teaching of pure morality. So considered, it compared favorably with the intolerance of self-styled orthodoxy and the war of creeds and confessions which went on about it with no more of either ethics or religion than it had itself. The cause of toleration and the movements of philanthropy were advanced through its ministrations more than through those of the

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

orthodox. But with all its virtues it was not religion. It had lost the depth of religious life and had become a polished, urbane, cultured, humane, ethical system. It was a credit to the society and the civilization which produced it, but it was not a religion.

When the apologists had done their work, when Butler had hurled the thunderbolts of his *Analogy of Religion* and Paley his *Evidences of Christianity* against Deism, it was generally conceded that the victory rested with the orthodox, by the combined force of scholarship, conservatism and piety. The apologists had started out to prove that it is more reasonable to believe in a God who comes into his world occasionally to direct events and provide for the future happiness of the faithful, than to believe in a God who has had nothing to do with the world since its creation except to sit afar off and watch it go. The consensus of opinion was that they had proved it, and that phase of unbelief was thenceforth not to be feared.

But, as is shown by the history of all doctrinal controversies, and nowhere more clearly than here, the hand of the theologian, like that of the dyer, is subdued to what it works in. When Deism had been overthrown, it was discovered that orthodoxy, in overthrowing it, had become like it. Its God was far off. It found the sanctions of religion and morality alike in egoistic utilitarianism. It was cold, hard, rigid and dead. The established church was in an especially unhappy condition. There was need for a revival of both religion and theology. The revival of religion came with the Wesleyan and Evangelical revival. The renaissance of theology did not come until much later, and English theologians faced the nineteenth century with a system of doctrine which had done honorable service but had already exhibited its defects.

Turning to the continent to trace the genesis of the second general line of theological influence, it is necessary to go back to the period immediately fol-

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

lowing the Reformation, the period which has been designated as the age of Protestant Scholasticism, and which might be called the age of scholastic Calvinism. Certain characteristics which were inherent in the nature of Calvinism constituted the need for the introduction of a new principle in theology. Foremost among these may be mentioned the lack of the historic sense. There was, even in the mind of Calvin himself, and still more conspicuously in his immediate successors, a total failure to grasp the idea of development, whereby it may be possible for God to change his methods of dealing with men as the needs of men change. The lack of this simple conception (which has been absent much more than it has been present in the history of Christian thought) made it necessary to insist upon the immutability of the divine decrees, upon the pre-determination of every individual's salvation or damnation from all eternity, upon the substantial identity of the method of salvation and of the revela-

tion of God as set forth in the Old and New Testaments. For God to determine upon the salvation of a righteous man without having determined it before all ages, would be for God to change his mind; and that would be inconsistent with his character as the Eternal One. For God to establish one method of salvation for one age, and another for a later age, would be inconsistent with the changelessness which must mark the divine character.

Growing immediately out of this absence of the idea of development, was a forced and mechanical use of Scripture. The war among Protestant dogmatists had quickly driven them to the assertion of the verbal inspiration and absolute inerrancy of Scripture. This was an increased emphasis upon the formal principle of Protestantism—the authority of the Bible—and it was accompanied by a grossly mechanical view of the nature of the Scriptures and the sort of authority which they are to exercise. Since no distinction was made between differ-

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

ent periods of God's dealings with men, or different dispensations, all books of the Bible were used indiscriminately as "arsenals of proof-texts" from which to draw weapons for the war against theological adversaries. One of the very first effects of the rise of doctrinal differences in Protestantism was this abuse of the Bible under the plea of exalting it as the sole authority. The theory of verbal inspiration was the last resource of dogmatic and divided Protestantism, when each sect was trying to unite Christendom on the basis of its own complete theological system. The misuse of Scripture was most flagrant among Calvinistic champions of the second generation.

As a third defect of Calvinism may be mentioned the fact that its most essential doctrines were based on a conception of man which was being undermined by the development of individualism. As the sense of race unity became weaker and the worth of the individual was more distinctly affirmed, such doctrines

as that of inherited original sin, in all its Calvinistic rigors, became difficult to explain and defend satisfactorily. Even where the far-reaching consequences of Adam's sin were not categorically denied, it was impossible for the Fall and the inherited sin of the race to occupy such an important place in the thought of those who were imbued with the modern idea of the freedom and responsibility of the individual. The demand was for an anthropology and a soteriology which would leave more scope for each man to work out his own salvation. Romanism had proposed to save men *en masse* in the church. Calvinism responded to the individualizing tendency of the age so far as to propose to save a few men in detail, but without their active co-operation. The doctrines of the fall of all men in Adam and the atonement by the death of Christ were too firmly fixed to be removed, but there was a need for an interpretation of them which would be more defensible by giving fuller recognition to the worth of the in-

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

dividual and the importance of the part which he must play in the process of his own salvation. In other words, the spirit of the times demanded a doctrine of salvation which would tell each man what to do to be saved. Calvinism did not do that.

The various defections from strict Calvinism in the sixteenth century and the early part of the seventeenth, were in part attempts to remedy these defects. Arminianism, the most formidable of these revolts, was fairly successful in emphasizing the man-ward side of the process of salvation and gave some stimulus to a more reasonable method of using the Bible, but it contributed little toward the idea of development, without which there could be no rational method of exegesis and no satisfactory escape from the rigors of Calvinism.

Of the several movements having this end more or less consciously in view, the one which most completely met the requirements, and the one which, by its subsequent line of influence, is most im-

portant for the present consideration, is the Covenant or Federal Theology under the leadership of the Dutch theologians, Cocceius and Witsius. Cocceius was a professor of theology at the University of Leyden, where he died in 1669. In the system which he formulated there were valuable contributions to each of these three points in which Calvinism was defective: the idea of development, or the history of the plan of salvation; a more satisfactory and fruitful method of exegesis, growing out of the application of the distinction between the dispensations to the Bible; and a view of the relation between God and man which attached much importance to human activity in salvation.

The *idea of development* of the plan of salvation was simply the conception which the apostle Paul had in mind when he maintained that the Old Testament law was from God and had been binding, but was now done away. Simple as this idea appears, it was lost sight of almost immediately in the post-apos-

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

tolic age. For lack of this idea, Jews and some Jewish Christians (Ebionites) insisted that the law must be perpetually binding, since it is from God. Gnostics found it necessary to deny that the Old Testament had ever been binding, in order to escape the obligation to keep the ritual law now. The orthodox, equally in the dark as to how they became free from the law, excused their disregard of it by elaborately allegorizing it. The Reformation theologians, as already pointed out, were equally destitute of the conception. For Luther, justification by faith was a doctrine of such overwhelming importance that he quite neglected to note the process by which man had been educated up to the point where justification by faith was possible. This one doctrine was, for him, the everlasting expression of the attitude of God toward men. The doctrine of predestination represented Calvin's conception of the relation between God and men,—a timeless and eternal relation which has existed in all ages.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

Both Luther and Calvin read their central doctrines into the Old Testament by any method of exegesis which the necessities of the case seemed to demand. Since there were no Jewish Christians then, as there had been in the second century, they could take what they wanted from the Old Testament and there was no one to raise embarrassing questions about the perpetuity of the ritual law.

The first deliberate recognition of the truth that God has dealt with men differently at different times, and that He can give a command for a limited time without compromising the eternity of His nature, is found in the work of Hyperius, Olevianus and Raphael Eglin, all sixteenth century Calvinists of strict type. But this, in their minds, amounted to no more than a discrimination between different stages in the operation and ministration of a divine grace which was always absolute and irresistible. It was Cocceius who first attempted to construct a complete history

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

of the process of salvation by fitting all the divine commands and promises as contained in the Scriptures, into a framework of successive covenants or dispensations. On this basis he aimed to construct a systematic, Biblical theology which would embrace, not only the present conditions of salvation, but also a statement of the steps by which these conditions were developed.

The effect of this conception of development upon his *method of exegesis* and general attitude toward the Bible was immediate and salutary. Dorner says of Cocceius and his associates that "simple piety and an ardent attachment to Scripture" were their leading characteristics. Such common-sense principles of interpretation as these were adopted: That the plain and obvious meaning of the passage is to be taken; that words are to be taken in their ordinary sense in connection with the context, without running into allegory or symbolism; that books of the Bible are to be considered in their historical setting as connected

wholes; that the whole Bible, even, is to be considered as a connected account of God's dealings with men, and can be interpreted only as the relations of its parts are understood and observed. The single principle which gives unity to the Scriptures is the idea of the history of the process of salvation for the human race, in successive dispensations, which runs through it all.

These rules of interpretation seem commonplace and obvious now. They did not seem so a century ago, and in the days of Cocceius they were revolutionary. They meant that the commands of the Old Testament could not be quoted to sustain any doctrine as to the present means of salvation. They meant that proof-texts could not be drawn from Leviticus, Daniel and the Song of Songs, and used on a par with quotations from the Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Romans, to enforce the doctrines of Christianity. The distinction between the dispensations thus became, even with Cocceius, the key to a

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

more intelligent and discriminating use of the Scriptures, and he thus earned the title, "the father of modern exegesis."

Yet even Cocceius underestimated the distinction between the Old and New Testaments. In his view, the great line of cleavage was at the Fall. Before this was the Covenant of Works; after it, the various stages of the Covenant of Grace, including the Patriarchal, Jewish and Christian dispensations. But in spite of his making the abolition of the law and the transition from the Jewish to the Christian dispensation a minor division within the Covenant of Grace, he was accused by his contemporaries of paying too little respect to the Old Testament. It is easy to see how, from the standpoint of strict Calvinism, devoid of the historical sense which he possessed, this criticism might readily be made.

The third point at which this Covenant Theology departed from Calvinism and supplied one of its defects, was in conceiving of the *relation between God and man* in a form which gave some

adequate scope to the activity of man, without falling into the opposite extreme of justification by works. The feature of the theology of Cocceius which gave its name to the whole school, was the conception of the relation between God and man as a *covenant*. It is of the essence of a covenant that it involves the co-operation of at least two parties. A command which must be obeyed simply because it is commanded is not a covenant; a divine, irresistible decree is not a covenant. A covenant is an agreement with two sides.

But the covenant between God and man is not in all respects the same as a covenant between men, in which case the stipulations would be agreed upon by common consent. Here Cocceius guards against any infringement of the sovereignty of God. Since God is the supreme ruler, it is in his power to formulate the conditions of the covenant and to offer it to men to be accepted or rejected.

The fundamental character of this

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

idea of covenants with writers of this school may be judged from the titles of a few of the principal works representing this theology:

Cocceius: Summa Doctrinæ de Fœdere et Testamentis Dei.

Burmann: Synopsis Theologiæ et Œconomix Fœderum Dei.

Witsius: Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man.

Moma: De Varia Conditione et Statu Ecclesiæ Dei sub Triplici Œconomia Fœderum Dei.

Braun: Doctrina Fœderum.

The conception of a covenant, of God and man entering into an agreement with each other, involves the idea that man has a definite and active part to perform in the relationship. The idea of pardon and salvation as offered and accepted on certain conditions is substituted for the conception of the absolute power of divine grace operating on a man who is impotent either to accept or repel its advances. Hence it may be said that the covenant theology lays stress on the practical question regarding the conditions of salvation, the

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

terms of the covenant as viewed from the man-ward side. The question, "What must I do to be saved?" is not foreign to this theology, as it is to Calvinism. Man's part of the agreement constitutes the conditions of salvation; God's part constitutes the motives which impel men to enter into the covenant.

The very fact of the practical character of this system, its clear statement of what man must do and what he has a right to expect when he has done it, opens the way to a bargain-and-sale conception of religion which loses the essential spirit of true religion. It shares this danger in common with every view of religion which departs from the idea of sovereign and irresistible divine grace as the beginning and end of the process of salvation. If there is anything for man to do in the matter, there must be a motive to lead him to do it. The danger is that this motive will be expressed in terms which are essentially utilitarian. It is possible to disguise egoistic hedonism in the pious

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

garb of desire for eternal life, and so degrade religion into a shrewd transaction on man's part, whereby, in exchange for the surrender of his present freedom for a short period, he gains eternal happiness. It is obvious that the conception of the relation between God and man as a covenant, has a certain affinity with the utilitarian ethics which was developed in England in the eighteenth century.

The idea of man's relation to God as a covenant may be considered as an application of the "social contract" theory to theology. The theory of the origin of government by the social contract, starts with the hypothesis not only that the individual man is the unit of value in government, but also that there was actually a time when men existed as unsocial individuals with no governmental bonds, and that human government arose by the formation of a contract, whereby each individual surrendered some of his rights in return for the benefits of association. When this the-

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

ory was used for the defense of monarchy, it was said that the contract had been between the subjects and the ruler, whereby the subjects conferred upon the ruler the right which each man had had to control himself. This was the form which it took with Hobbes. When it was used to support democracy, it was maintained, as by Rosseau, that the contract was primarily between the various individuals who composed the state, and that they could recall their concessions and destroy the authority of the government whenever it ceased to operate to their satisfaction. Thus the social contract theory was made to uphold the divine right of kings or the right of revolution, according as it was interpreted.

In its application to the relation between God and man, the tendency was of necessity toward the former interpretation. Since the parties to the contract are not on an equal footing, God lays down the terms of association and it is for man to accept or reject them.

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

The advocates of the governmental social contract theory made the unsocial individual the unit of the whole system. Some, like Hobbes, maintained that there was no law of right and wrong before the contract, and that therefore all law and all right after the contract depended on the will of the sovereign. Others, like Hugo Grotius, maintained a distinction between two kinds of law. Natural law exists from the beginning in the very nature of man and is dependent upon no contract; positive or statutory law comes into being with the rise of government through the social contract. Grotius was not only the greatest jurist of his age, but an Arminian theologian who adhered to the doctrine of the covenants as strongly as to the social contract theory. Accordingly, he recognized two kinds of divine law for men who are under the covenant, just as there are two kinds of human law for men who are under the social contract. There are *moral* precepts which are determined by the nature of God and

could not conceivably be other than they are; and there are *positive* precepts which represent the requirements which God has arbitrarily imposed as the conditions of the covenant. This distinction between positive and moral precepts, which is found also in Mr. Campbell's writings, has its origin here in the analogy of the doctrine of the covenants with the social contract theory.

The relation of the covenant theology to Calvinism was not at first one of open opposition. It was stimulated by the conditions which Calvinism had brought about, and it aimed at first to interpret some of the Calvinistic doctrines in a more liberal spirit, so that it would not lay itself open to such sweeping denials as that contained in Arminianism. Its implications were antagonistic to Calvinism, but this fact did not appear to the earliest advocates of the system. In the stress of theological controversy, the contradiction soon came to light and the Reformed Church in

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Holland was threatened with schism. A timely compromise averted the division of the church, and the covenant theology continued to be only a school of theological thought. It never became the basis of a sect. To this fact is due the wide dissemination of its influence among religious thinkers of all parties; and for the same reason this influence has gained inadequate recognition in the history of Protestant thought. It has spread abroad in the minds of men who knew scarcely so much as the names of its originators. Consequently it is not to be expected that the historical connections between this school and later thinkers who were influenced by it can be traced with accuracy and completeness. We shall be content to consider this as a part of Mr. Campbell's theological heritage, if it can be shown that there are in his system important ideas which were introduced to the Protestant world by Cocceius and his associates. The influence of the covenant theology can, how-

ever, be traced to some extent not only in Holland, but also in England and Scotland.

Soon after the Synod of Dort, England began to be invaded by Arminianism and by influences traceable to the covenant theology, and from that time pure Calvinism can scarcely be said to have existed in the Church of England. The Westminster Confession distinguished, as Cocceius had done, between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace, with the dividing line at the Fall, and its statement of the doctrine of the atonement was cast in the mold of the covenants. There arose during the seventeenth century, a controversy which was of little consequence except for its influence on the church in Scotland during the following century. It was between the so-called Antinomians and Neonomians, and it will be seen that each party emphasized one side of the teaching of Cocceius. The Antinomians, emphasizing the distinction between the Jewish and Christian dis-

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

pensations, maintained that we are no longer under law in any sense, but purely under grace; *i. e.*, that salvation does not depend upon obedience to any commands, as under the Jewish dispensation, but is the free gift of God to whom he pleases. This was the old doctrine of predestination, defended by the argument which had formerly been used against it. On the other hand, the Neonomians, laying stress upon the requirement of individual responsibility, held that the Christian dispensation leaves us still under a law, but a new law, since it requires each man to obey certain commands in order to be saved, but not the commands given under the Jewish regime.

The direct and indirect influence of these Dutch theologians was much more marked in Scotland than in England. Several causes combined to weaken the Calvinism of the Church of Scotland about the end of the seventeenth century. When prelacy was forced upon Scotland by Charles II., many Presbyterian minis-

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

ters were banished, and most of them spent the years of their exile in Holland, where, in spite of its condemnation by the Synod of Dort, Arminianism was rife and the Covenant Theology was at the height of its influence. Even after this period of exile was passed, it was customary, for a time, to send theological students to Holland to be educated. When episcopacy was finally withdrawn from Scotland, the taint of Arminianism was not withdrawn with it, and the controversy between Antinomians and Neonomians was transplanted from England. When the age of persecution ceased, with the Revolution of 1688, and the Church of Scotland was at peace with its enemies without, there began a long series of theological controversies within the church which made the eighteenth century a dreary and disruptive period for Scotch Presbyterianism.

As the result of these influences, a majority of the General Assembly embraced the freer views, and a proposition representing the strictest variety of Cal-

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

vinism was voted down by the Assembly. Following this there came a popular conservative revolt. The Secession of 1733 was, on its theological side, a counter-reformation of Calvinism, a reconstruction and re-affirmation of the doctrine of Predestination as interpreted by the English Antinomians. This controversy was well under way when there was discovered an old book which gave to it its name. "The Marrow of Modern Divinity," the work of an English "antinomian," was nearly a century old and had long been forgotten, when Thomas Boston brought it to light and made it the theological text-book of the Secession. The book represented a combination of the general position of the Covenant Theology on the dispensations, with the strict Calvinistic doctrine of irresistible grace and human impotence.

Two of the three points at which the Covenant Theology had departed from Calvinism were therefore represented in Scotland at this time. The established church maintained, in a rather feeble

and wavering fashion, the necessity of man's meeting certain established conditions of salvation. The Secession maintained the distinction between the dispensations. But neither followed the method of exegesis which Cocceius had inaugurated, though both claimed to be intensely Biblical. The Secession movement is, in some respects, comparable to the Wesleyan revival which was contemporary with it in England. The difference between the two, as regards their view of the Scriptures, was exhibited in a conference between Whitefield and Moncrieff, one of the leaders of the Secession, during an evangelistic tour by the former in Scotland. In discussing a point of church polity, Whitefield dissented from an opinion which had been expressed. Laying his hand over his heart, he said with emotion, "I do not find it here." Moncrieff replied, as he slapped the Bible that lay before him, "But, sir, I find it here!"

Religious thought in Scotland during the eighteenth century was, as has been

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

shown, thoroughly permeated with the principles of the Covenant Theology. The established church felt it only as a softening of the rigors of Calvinism. The Seceders cast their whole theology in the mold of the dispensations as representing different stages of the operation of divine grace. The "*Marrow of Modern Divinity*" and Boston's "*Fourfold State*," which became as popular as "*Pilgrim's Progress*," embodied this conception. In the lethargy in which the church was steeped in the latter part of the eighteenth century, most of the positive virtues, which had marked the system of Cocceius and Witsius, disappeared; but the framework was still there, albeit much obscured, and it was natural that any reformatory work, especially one which made its appeal to Scripture, should proceed on that basis.

The development of the Covenant Theology and its influence in England and Scotland has been dwelt upon because it is believed that this theology

exercised an important influence upon Mr. Campbell's thought. The proof of this proposition does not demand that it shall be shown that he read the original Latin works of the originators of that movement, but only that his thought contains elements strikingly similar to the earlier system, and that the chain of influences from it to him—the historic continuity, so to speak—is reasonably complete.

Mr. Campbell refers occasionally in his works to the writings of both Cocceius and Witsius, in one case quoting page and particular edition in a manner which would indicate that the quotation was made at first hand from the original work. Boston's "*Fourfold State*," which represented the influence of the Covenant Theology on the Seceder Presbyterian Church, of which Mr. Campbell was a member, was read during the voyage which ended in the shipwreck and the sojourn at Glasgow. The "*Marrow of Modern Divinity*" could scarcely have

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

been unknown to either Thomas or Alexander Campbell.

But aside from these particular considerations, and more conclusive than these scanty proofs of his acquaintance with this or that book, is the fact that, as already shown, the Covenant Theology thoroughly permeated the theological thought of Scotland in the eighteenth century and found most noteworthy expression in the position of the Seceders. It was in the air that he breathed. Thomas Campbell was educated in the theological seminary of the Seceders and his son was well read in the theological literature of the time. To suppose that he was not acquainted with this phase of thought, would be to suppose that he was ignorant of something which was the common property of the denomination with which he was connected. Undoubtedly Mr. Campbell knew the Covenant Theology as interpreted by the Seceders. Probably he knew it as it was taught by its Dutch originators.

The claim that Alexander Campbell received a valuable heritage of suggestion from the Covenant Theology is supported by a consideration of the points of similiarity between the two.

1. Both are intensely Biblical systems. Of Cocceius, Heppe (*Dogmen des deutschen Protestantismus*) says: "The fruit of his influence on the Reformed systematic theology, was to lead theologians back to the word of God, delivering it from the bondage of traditional scholasticism." The same can be said of Mr. Campbell. Even his opponents admitted that he was learned in the Scriptures, and found fault only with his interpretations.

2. Applying the idea of development, or of successive dispensations, to the interpretation of the Bible, they hold in common the view that the Old Testament belongs to a former covenant which has passed away. It is valuable as a record of God's dealing with men, but its commands are no longer binding.

3. Both were reactions against simi-

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

lar conditions. The Protestant scholasticism which characterized the second generation of Reformers, finds a close parallel in the state of religion in Scotland and still more in the United States, at the beginning of the present century.

4. Both opposed the doctrine of predestination and sovereign, irresistible grace, as tending to discourage human effort and nullify the influence of the appeal of the Gospel to men's acceptance.

5. Both were practical movements, laying stress on the conditions which man must meet to put himself in right relations with God. They aimed to relieve penitent sinners of the uncertainty and agony of "waiting" and "seeking," and gave prominence to the answer to the question, "What shall we do?"—the terms of admission to the kingdom of God.

5. The two kinds of law, which Grotius had derived from the theory of the social contract, and which had a place in the analogous conception of re-

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

ligion under the form of a covenant between God and man, find expression in Campbell's distinction between positive and moral precepts,—a distinction which was of importance in his teaching in regard to baptism.

A word must be said about Mr. Campbell's attitude toward his own sources. It was characteristic of him that he attached little importance to the historical development of ideas. Although he gave much emphasis to the thought of the development of the plan of salvation in successive dispensations, the continuity of Christian thought made but slight appeal to him. There are no successive dispensations of truth within the Christian economy. What is true, is true; and what is not true, is false. That an idea, though not absolutely true in itself, may aid in the advancement of truth in other than a purely negative fashion, he did not admit. In writing of his indebtedness to others for religious and theological ideas, he says that he was more indebted to their failures than to their suc-

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

cesses. As the wreck of one ship may warn another from a dangerous coast, so he admitted he had been helped by the mistakes of earlier theologians. He does not admit a large indebtedness to Sandeman, or McLean, or the Haldanes, from all of whom he was supposed to have derived much. (*Christian Baptist*, pp. 228, 399.) And yet again, when he was accused of lacking originality, he disclaimed any effort at originality, and said that he would be poor indeed if there were taken from him all that he had borrowed from his predecessors.

In truth, Mr. Campbell was a man singularly free from prejudice and from slavish dependence upon masters. He was committed to no fixed system. He was therefore free to take up any current idea which seemed to him true and useful. The conclusions of earlier thinkers came to him not as authorities, but as suggestions. He did not always appreciate how impossible it would have been for him to have gotten on without these suggestions. He says: "I have

endeavored to read the Scriptures as though no one had ever read them before me; and I am as much on my guard against reading them to-day through the medium of my views yesterday or a week ago, as I am against being influenced by any foreign name, authority, or system whatever." To say that he did not construct his system as though no one had ever constructed a system before him, is only to say that he was a man and subject to the limitations of human thought.

The consideration of the philosophical and theological conditions of the eighteenth century, in the atmosphere of which Mr. Campbell received his training, has led to the conclusion that, among the influences which determined the mold in which his thought was cast, two are pre-eminently important:

First, the philosophical system of John Locke, which, in spite of the objectionable and untenable extremes to which

it had been developed, was still the only philosophical instrument at hand, determined Mr. Campbell's view of the nature of man, the manner in which human knowledge originates and the channels through which any communication from God must be made to man. The next phase of modern philosophy, which Kant had already inaugurated as a basis, not for agnosticism, but for a positive reconstruction after the destructive issue of the Philosophy of the Enlightenment, had been introduced into England by Coleridge, but had as yet made little impression on theology.

Second, the Dutch theologians, Cocceius and Witsius, in the Covenant Theology, had developed the idea of successive dispensations, which idea had been received into Scotland and was there current at the time when Mr. Campbell was receiving suggestions from that source. This conception assisted him materially in arriving at a reasonable method of using the Scriptures and in the formulation of several doctrines.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

It remains to be shown, by an examination of his statement of particular doctrines, in what respects and to what degree these two influences entered into his theological system.

CHAPTER IV
The Kingdom of God

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

- I. IMPLICATIONS OF DOCTRINE OF COVENANTS:
 1. Successive dispensations in the Kingdom.
 2. A contract with two sides.
- II. SERMON ON THE LAW:
 1. All law done away, but morality remains.
 2. Gospel does what law could not do.
 3. Use of Old Testament now.
- III. ELEMENTS OF THE KINGDOM.
- IV. CONNECTION OF THE DISPENSATIONS.
- V. FOUR STAGES OF KINGDOM OF GOD:
 1. Edenic—God known by sense perception.
 2. Patriarchal—Fall limits perception.
 3. Jewish—Decalogue, the constitution or basis of a verbal agreement.
 4. Christian—government by principles; law delivered at Pentecost; positive and moral laws; laws of naturalization and laws for citizens.
- VI. HAPPINESS THE SUPREME MOTIVE.
- VII. CONSEQUENCES OF DISTINCTION BETWEEN DISPENSATIONS.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

In the systematizing of Mr. Campbell's doctrinal ideas, the central place must be given to his idea of the Kingdom of God. Around this the other doctrines group themselves, and their relations to it determine the form which they are to take. This is necessarily so from the character of his problem and the means which he adopted for its solution. The unity of the church is to be found by making the terms of ecclesiastical fellowship as nearly as possible coincident with the conditions of citizenship in the Kingdom of God. The latter are to be determined by an appeal to Scripture. The idea of the Kingdom of God thus became the center for the reconstruction, and the practical problem of unity compelled him to emphasize especially one phase of the Kingdom of

God, viz., the terms of admission, or the conditions of citizenship.

In the formulation of this doctrine, the influence of the Dutch theologians is most strikingly apparent. There are two implications which go with a doctrine of the covenants: *first*, the idea of successive dispensations, as being the stages in the history of the process of salvation, and therewith the sharp distinction between the present Christian dispensation and the Covenant of the Law which has been transcended; *second*, the conception of the relation between man and God as one of covenant or agreement, into which man enters voluntarily, by the acceptance of certain specified conditions on the basis of definite promises.

The first expression of this line of thought which we meet with in Mr. Campbell's work, was in his celebrated sermon on the Law, which was preached before the Redstone Baptist Association in Virginia, in 1816. It was this, more than anything else, which brought about

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

the charges of heresy against him from his Baptist brethren, and which finally led to his separation from that communion. The substance of the sermon, which presented the fundamental idea in some of its practical bearings, is as follows: The Law, which is done away, is the whole Mosaic dispensation, including judicial and moral as well as ceremonial legislation. The whole system was intended to subserve a temporary end and, that end having been accomplished, the system has been abrogated by the appearance of the Christian dispensation.

But by including the moral law in that which was done away, the basis of morality is not overthrown, for morality rests upon a deeper and more enduring foundation than the Mosaic Covenant. In the overthrow of the Law, there are two commandments which stand fast because they are constitutive principles of all morals and all religion: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength; and thy

neighbor as thyself." These are permanent, while all the rest are transient.

There are certain things which the Law was not able to do. It could not give righteousness, and therefore it could not give life; it could not show the enormity of sin, in all its fulness; it could not give a suitable rule of life for imperfect humanity, so it gave a partial rule to a part of humanity—the Jewish race. These defects are remedied under the Gospel, which completely took the place of the Law. From this relation of the two dispensations, there follow certain conclusions: (a) The essential difference between Law and Gospel. (b) That Christians are not under the Law or any part of it, and that the removal of the binding force of the moral portion of the Mosaic code does not leave us Antinomians. (c) That it is useless to preach the Law to prepare people for the Gospel. (d) That arguments cannot be drawn from the Old Testament, in support of any forms, practices or ordinances in the Christian Church.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

This sermon gave a practical and popular presentation of his view of the relation of the Covenants in its bearings on the religious life and practice of the times. The subject is treated more elaborately and more systematically in a series of articles in the *Christian Baptist*, in the treatise on Christian Baptism and in the Christian System.

The divine government in its successive forms is always a monarchy, never a republic. Monarchy is said to be the natural form of government, an organism with one head, whereas republics are useful only because of the degeneracy of man and the impossibility of getting a good ruler who will not be corrupted by power. Again monarchy is better suited for efficient action in a state of war, and it is a state of war in the moral universe which the Kingdom of God is designed to meet.

In a kingdom there are five elements: constitution, king, subjects, laws and territory. The Jewish and Christian systems have all of these. They are

constitutional monarchies, because God's relation with fallen man, whereby he seeks to redeem him, is in the form of a compact, with mutual promises. This has always been so since man fell and God began to try to reclaim him. The demands which are made upon man and the promises which are made to him, vary with the development of his needs and capabilities.

The promises which were made to Abraham, included the prophecy of the two dispensations which were to follow. "I will make of thee a great nation," refers to the Jewish Covenant whereby God entered into special relations with the Hebrew people. "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," points to the Christian dispensation and its universal character. There is seen to be, therefore, a connection between the covenants, in that one leads up to the others and that the second and third are prophesied in the first. The promise which went with the covenant to Abraham was that the land of Canaan

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

should be given as an inheritance to the nation which was to be. To fulfill this promise of the land, the second covenant became necessary when Israel as a nation left Egypt.

The Jewish dispensation was based upon a political, moral, and religious constitution. Its institutions, also, foreshadowed the spiritual truths of the coming Christian dispensation, and the complete fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham by blessing all the nations of the earth in his seed. "Every one who would accurately understand the Christian institution, must approach it through the Mosaic; and he who would be proficient in the Jewish, must make Paul his commentator." In view of such statements as these—and there are many of them—it cannot be said that Mr. Campbell belittled, much less rejected, the Old Testament, as he was frequently accused of doing.

The development of the plan of salvation is set forth in four different stages, but there are other minor subdivisions,

nine in all,—as with Witsius. Of the four, the first is the primitive state of *Edenic* innocence. Here man, as yet unmarred by sin, sees and hears God immediately, with no need for a special revelation. God and man are inhabitants of the same world and their relations are too intimate to need any special manifestation. In the Fall occurs the separation. Man loses, in a measure, his God-like image, can no longer perceive God directly by sight and hearing, and no longer has even a correct idea of Him. They now live in separate spheres. The first man born after the Fall was the man of Locke's psychology, knowing the natural world through sensation and nothing more. Even in the paradisiacal state, the knowing faculty of man was constructed on Lockian principles. All knowledge, even then, was in a sensible form, but the senses were such that they could receive impressions from spiritual realities. The effect of the Fall is to limit the sphere in which the senses can act, and

to limit man's knowledge to the natural world. Revelation now becomes necessary, and with that begins a new chapter in the history of man.

With the earlier exponents of the Covenant Theology, the line of cleavage at the Fall was made the most important in the whole history of salvation, because the idea of original sin, as something demanding an explanation, was constantly in their minds. With Mr. Campbell, on the contrary, this idea had a very unimportant place, and the Fall was accordingly relegated to a relatively subordinate place. Whatever importance it had, came rather from the Lockian limitation of man's knowing powers, than from the idea of original sin. Or perhaps it might be sufficient to say that original sin, in its Lockian interpretation, meant the narrowing of the field of sensible knowledge. Original sin becomes therefore an inherited and perpetual limitation of man's power of perception, instead of an inherited and perpetual guilt.

The *patriarchal* age, extending from Adam to Moses, was the period in which the family relation was conspicuous, because at this time the family, or the tribe, was the highest social unit. The recognition of the development of the knowledge of God and the growing intimacy between man and God through successive revelations through this age, makes it apparent that the religious truth of a single dispensation is not conceived to be all delivered, necessarily, as a deposit at the beginning of the dispensation. Thus the religious institutions of the patriarchal age, while suited to the infancy of the race, show a constant development. The altar of sacrifice was the most significant institution of the antediluvian world. Religious regard was paid to the seventh day. The priesthood developed as there was need of it, the head of each family acting, at first, as his own priest. The idea of the separation between clean and unclean beasts, as having significance for religious rites, also "got abroad before the

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

flood." It is not to be understood that man by natural processes develops these ideas, for he is incapable of such knowledge, but that God revealed them to him gradually. So the covenant of each succeeding dispensation was of the nature of a codification of the religious ideas which had been revealed, one at a time, during the preceding age. This was especially true during the patriarchal dispensation. It was less so during the Jewish, and in the Christian dispensation all is fixed and complete at the beginning. The religion of the pagan nations was supposed to have been derived from the revelations of Jehovah in this age.

The *Jewish* dispensation is the period of national religion. Here God assumes the relation of kingship over a single nation because the national life was now beginning to rise into prominence. There is a distinct break in the continuity of the development here when God organizes and leads forth Israel out of Egypt and becomes its national God.

The kingship is distinctly a new relation, and the preliminaries of it are announced with many signs of the presence and power of God. "They see and hear what they never heard or saw before." The revelation, it will be observed, again comes in the form of seeing and hearing,—an extension of sense-perception beyond its ordinary limits. The first requisite in the new relation between God and men, that of king and subject, was a constitution or covenant. This was provided in an agreement between God and the people, the terms of which were pronounced by God in words audible to two million people, and accepted by them by general vote. (From this fact the universal right of suffrage is deduced as a natural right.) This contract was an agreement between the governor and the governed, analogous to that whereby, according to the social contract theory, the state was originated through an agreement between king and people. But since God stands in a unique position as king, he alone

has the right to determine the terms of the contract and to submit them for acceptance. The constitution or covenant, in this case, was the Decalogue, which was distinguished accordingly from all the other laws of Israel. God agreed to protect them so long as they obeyed it. Disobedience of the other laws is never punished so severely as failure to observe this. To transgress the ceremonial law is a misdemeanor; but to disregard this written constitution, the Decalogue, is considered equivalent to treason.

The Jewish worship was symbolic, looking forward to the truths of the Christian dispensation. The promises and curses of the Jewish covenant did not look beyond the present life. "Moses, in his five books, has not a word to say about the future life." The blessings promised to those who keep the covenant are temporal prosperity, long life, and national success. So the Jewish dispensation was not intended so much to effect the eternal salvation of

those under it, as to preserve the knowledge of the character of God, to exhibit His virtues and to show the advantages of serving Him. The distinction between the purpose of the Jewish system and of the Christian system is seen in this fact, as well as in the fact that the Jewish covenant was intended primarily only for Israel. It accepted, but did not encourage, proselytes, and its code of laws did not include the command "Go, preach." Although the development of religious truth and progressive character of revelation within each dispensation is asserted, yet Mr. Campbell says that the "prophets added nothing to the law of Moses." There was, therefore, no real advance in religious knowledge, during this period.

The *Christian* dispensation is distinguished by the idea of the blotting out of sins, followed by the joy and peace of forgiveness. The joy of Christian experience is the result which follows entrance to the kingdom, and must not be regarded as the criterion of fitness for

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

admission. The new dispensation differs from the old in being a government of principles, not of precepts. The religion of Israel was delivered in a series of detailed and specific commands, including a catalogue of religious, moral and ceremonial duties. In the new dispensation there is no authoritative ritual, liturgy or manual. Its supreme law is love. The idea of a covenant, wherein each party makes certain concessions and secures certain privileges, is conspicuously present. The king, Christ, has received these privileges: he is to be the Oracle of God, to have the disposal of the Holy Spirit, to be prophet and high priest and supreme law-giver over all the earth. The subjects of the kingdom, in return for their allegiance, receive the promised protection of their constitutional king. They are pardoned, justified, saved from sin, are adopted into the family of God, are given the means of knowing God, and receive the promise of resurrection and eternal life and blessedness. The laws of the king-

THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

dom were not delivered until the kingdom had been set up, *i. e.*, at Pentecost. So the laws must be looked for in the records after that time, in the Acts and in the Epistles, just as the laws under the Jewish covenant are to be looked for in the books treating of the time after Sinai, not in Genesis.

The laws of the kingdom may be divided into two classes, positive and moral; or again, by another two-fold division into laws of naturalization, and laws for the citizens. The laws of naturalization constitute the conditions with which aliens must comply in seeking admission. The first step is to submit to them the constitution, *i. e.*, to preach the Gospel. When they understand it, believe and desire to accept, they may be admitted in the prescribed way—by being born of water and of the Spirit. These, together, constitute the condition of entrance into the Kingdom of God, elsewhere defined more particularly as faith, repentance and baptism.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Here, in Mr. Campbell's thought, the chief emphasis was laid.

Besides these positive laws touching the requirements for admission to membership, there are two other positive laws which apply to the citizens of the kingdom, viz., the weekly celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ in the Lord's Supper, and the meeting on the first day of every week for this celebration and for edification. All the other laws of the kingdom are moral, *i. e.*, such as must be approved by the enlightened conscience of man.

Faith is the principle by which the believer comes into possession of the spiritual blessing, but the necessary means of spiritual enjoyment are the ordinances. Just as nothing is known or enjoyed in the natural world except through the senses, so nothing is enjoyed in the spiritual world, except through faith. Here again, faith appears as an extension of sensation in a higher sphere, and the process of spiritual knowledge and enjoyment is interpreted

on the basis of the Lockian theory of natural knowledge. However much emphasis may be laid upon the terms of admission into the kingdom, these are not the consummation, but merely the preparatory steps. They constitute the gate into the kingdom of favor. The joys of that kingdom are received only through the ordinances, such as the preaching of the Gospel, the reading of the Scriptures, the observance of the Lord's Day, the Lord's Supper, prayer, etc.

As growing out of this conception of faith as an extension of sensational knowledge, we have naturally a eudæmonistic philosophy of religion. The covenants are the way by which man gets into relation to God. But why should man want to get into relation with God? The motive assigned is that his highest pleasure lies there. There is a clear recognition of the qualitative difference between various pleasures, so that the pleasures of religion are not put on a par with the pleasures of sensual

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

indulgence, but the motive after all is pleasure. "From the plan of the Bible, as well as from its philosophy, its claims upon the faith and admiration of mankind may be strongly argued: its philosophy is, that without piety no man can be happy; and that with it, any man, in any outward circumstances, may be happy to the full extent of his capacity for human enjoyment. All human enjoyments are reduced to two classes; one is spiritual and the other is carnal; the one is moral, social and refined, and the other is selfish, exclusive and gross; the one rises, the other sinks through all eternity. The philosophy of the Bible is, therefore, the philosophy of human happiness, the only philosophy which commends itself to the cultivated understanding of man." This idea of a noble, unselfish social happiness, from spiritual and intellectual sources, as the prime motive to action, is closely akin to the thought of some of the best of the ethical writers of the eighteenth century, especially Shaftesbury.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

Among the most important consequences of the clear distinction of the different dispensations in Mr. Campbell's thought, may be mentioned the following:

1. Baptism is not a substitute for circumcision, and likewise the whole list of pedobaptist arguments derived from the Old Testament are fallacious and inconsequential.

2. The Lord's Day is not a substitute for the Sabbath, is not to be observed as the Sabbath was observed or because it is commanded in the Decalogue.

3. The Christian ministry is in no sense a substitute for the Jewish priesthood, that function being now performed by Christ as High Priest, and by all believers as priests.

4. Morality is not based on the commands of the Decalogue, but on the moral laws of the Christian dispensation.

The other doctrines evidently fit into this view of the Kingdom of God as a framework, somewhat as follows: The

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

authority of Scripture is the objective source and criterion of all our ideas concerning God and his relations with men, and therefore concerning the Kingdom of God, its terms of admission and duties of membership. Faith, repentance and baptism are the naturalization laws, by conformity to which aliens are admitted to enjoy the privileges of citizenship in the kingdom. Conversion and regeneration are the change of state which takes place when the individual changes his relationship to God by entering the kingdom according to these provisions.

The Kingdom of God is a perpetual institution, but its specific requirements change with successive dispensations. God's purpose toward men is eternal, as Calvin had held, and this is shown in the fact that there has always been some way by which man could come to God. But the history of the process of salvation shows a succession of covenants under which the conditions of citizenship have varied. The protest made by Mr. Campbell upon this basis against

the indiscriminate use of the two Testaments as equally binding authorities for Christian doctrine and Christian practice, is quite parallel to the protest made by Cocceius and his followers against the similar method which was employed by scholastic Calvinism in his day. We live not only under the Kingdom of God, but under a particular dispensation of that kingdom, and our duties toward it are comprised only within the covenant of our own dispensation. The records of earlier covenants may be instructive, but only those of our own give the conditions of salvation—*i. e.*, of entrance into the kingdom—*for us.*

CHAPTER V
Authority and Inspiration

AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION.

- I. A BIBLICAL MOVEMENT.
- II. THE SEAT OF AUTHORITY:
 1. Knowledge of God only through Revelation.
 2. Revelation only through the written Word.
- III. METHOD OF INSPIRATION:
 1. Sensationalism supports verbal inspiration.
 2. Two-fold division of Scripture.
- IV. CRITERION OF REVELATION.
- V. RULES OF INTERPRETATION:
 1. Distinction between covenants.
 2. Baconian empiricism.
- VI. THE NATURE OF THE AUTHORITY:
 1. Bible as a law-book.
 2. Authority for doctrine and polity.
 3. Return to external authority for principle of unity.
 4. Comparison and contrast with Oxford Movement.

AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION.

The idea of the Kingdom of God embodies the conception of man's highest possible development and most complete happiness as consisting in relationship to God, through citizenship in His kingdom. The first inquiry which arises naturally relates to the source from which are derived the ideas of God and of a relationship with him, *i. e.*, the source of religious ideas and the seat of authority. With Alexander Campbell, this amounts to a study of the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures.

Theoretically there was nothing new in the acceptance of the Scriptures as the sole source and the objective criterion of religious truth. This was the principle of Protestantism, formulated by Chillingworth in his famous motto, "The Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants." Never-

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

theless this principle had repeatedly suffered obscuration, when the right of private judgment in interpretation fell into desuetude, and from time to time needed to be rediscovered and given a new emphasis. So it was when Cocceius effected a Biblical revival by his new method of exegesis. So Locke, in his religious writings, had endeavored to bring about a return to Biblical Christianity. His "Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures" was intended to clear away the rubbish of the current theological systems which were inherited from the past and could not be proved from the Word of God, just as his "Essay on the Human Understanding" aimed to clear away the metaphysical lumber of the schools. It was a somewhat similar condition of affairs which confronted Mr. Campbell, both in Scotland, where he received his first impulse, and in the United States, where the problem was worked out. In his mind, the revival of Biblical Christianity took the form of a readjustment

of the conditions of Church membership to meet the Scriptural requirements.

The pre-eminent position given to the Bible in Mr. Campbell's thought is logically connected with his conception of human knowledge and man's absolute dependence upon revelation for knowledge of God and spiritual things. It is absolutely necessary that there shall be a revealed rule for religion, because man, by himself, is completely incapable of knowing God. "There is not a spiritual idea in the whole human race which is not drawn from the Bible." (*Christian System*, p. 15.) Again, in beginning a discussion of the Holy Spirit (*Christian Baptist*, p. 82), he starts with the proposition that all knowledge of God or of the invisible world of spirit is derived immediately from the Spirit of God which "dictated" the Scriptures. All that heathen philosophers and pagan religionists have known about God, every idea of even the existence of a God, is dependent in some way upon the revelation in the Bible, and, if our his-

torical knowledge were complete, could be traced back, step by step, to that source. The tremendous historical assumption which this involves, is unhesitatingly made for the sake of maintaining the Lockian limitation of natural knowledge, which was conceived as magnifying the authority of the Bible.

Skeptics, likewise, who attack the tenets of positive religion, are attacking something of which they have absolutely no knowledge except through the one source which they repudiate. He says: "Were it our design, we could easily prove, upon the principles of all modern skeptics, that, unaided by the oracles of the Spirit they could never have known that there is a God, that there was a creation or a Creator, or that there is within them a spark of life superior to that of a brute." It can be shown with "demonstrable certainty" that "on the acknowledged principles of Locke, the Christian philosopher, and of Hume, the subtle skeptic, all the boasted intelligence of the Deistical world is a

plagiarism from the oracles of the Divine One.”

This point, the limitation of man's natural knowledge to things of sense, and his absolute dependence upon revelation for anything higher, is one of Campbell's most characteristically Lockian positions. But here is an instance of the logical development of Locke's principles beyond the conclusions which he himself derived from them. Locke had held that knowledge of God was demonstrable. But he accounted for it only by slipping in between the various ideas from sensation, surreptitiously, as it were, certain intuitions which, added up, amounted to a demonstration. These intuitions, as his followers with their more rigid logic soon saw, had no place in the sensational theory of knowledge. The logical character of Hume's agnostic deduction is inexorable.

Mr. Campbell accepts the results of this negative reasoning so far as the unaided human intellect is concerned, and admits, with the most atheistic, that the

natural reason can never know God, or even have any idea of his existence. He uses the Lockian argument in proof of this, that children are not born with the idea of God and hence that idea cannot be innate. His acceptance of the logical character of the skeptical reasoning was shown in a correspondence with the *New Harmony Gazette*, a paper published in the interests of Robert Owen's society of communistic infidels, at New Harmony, Ohio. Mr. Campbell proposed three questions in regard to the existence of God, the soul and immortality. The questions were answered agnostically: we can know nothing about such existences, because they can never be cognizable by the senses of man. This answer Mr. Campbell approved as being sound philosophy, so far as philosophy can go. "There can be no stopping place between deism and atheism. I give great praise to the New Harmony philosophers for their candor and honesty in avowing the conclusion which all the lights they have,

AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION

authorized them to maintain. I say they are good philosophers. They have reasoned well.”

But this line of argument is made only the introduction to a further step. Granted that we can have no natural knowledge or idea of God, it is nevertheless true that we actually do have such an idea. Our ideas of spiritual things are facts to be explained. They must have a cause and that cause, since it cannot be the natural reason, must be divine revelation. (Compare Descartes’s Anthropological proof of the existence of God, in the Third Meditation; to which Campbell adds Locke’s sensationalism to make an argument for the sole authority of the Scriptures in spiritual things.) “Indeed it all comes to this: if there be no innate ideas, as these philosophers teach, then the Bible is proved, from the principles of reason and from the history of the world, to be what it purports, a volume indited by the Spirit of the invisible God.” The same argument which proves that the Bible is a divine

revelation, because it contains ideas which could come from no other source, proves also that the Bible is the only channel through which we receive knowledge of spiritual things.

The same Lockian conception of knowledge which determined that man must be dependent upon something outside of himself for all ideas which belong in a sphere beyond the reach of his sensations, determines also that revelation can come only through the channels of the senses. It would not be a revelation to man if it were not a revelation in a form in which it is intelligible to man. Revelation does not revolutionize man's processes of knowledge, but extends them. So all revelation of the character and will of God, makes its appeal to the human understanding, *i. e.*, to the intellect, through the forms of sense perception. This precludes the idea of a mystical or emotional revelation which might be independent of the written Word. The argument on the Lockian basis results, therefore, in the

conclusion of the absolute dependence of man upon the revelation contained in the Scriptures for all his spiritual ideas, and the consequent fallacy of natural religion and the impotence and vanity of human authority in religious matters.

Man gets truth through the intellect just as surely as light through the eyes, and only so. Revelation is conceived of as essentially and exclusively a matter of knowledge, not a matter of emotions, impulses, stimuli. Hence we have the conception of communication between God and man defined and limited by those two Lockian conceptions. *First*, any communication addressed to man must be in terms of knowledge and must make its entrance through the gate of the intellect; for ideas are with Locke the universal thing, and emotions can be conveyed from man to man only when worked up into the form of intellectual concepts. This excludes all mystical ideas of communion between God and man on a purely emotional and experiential basis. *Second*, man's intellect is

of such a sort, being wholly dependent upon the material supplied by the senses, that it could never attain to the apprehension of any spiritual idea. Communication with God being therefore limited to intellectual apprehension, and the knowing power being limited by the senses, it follows that all communication with God is limited to the one medium, the Book, which the senses can grasp as a concrete object of sensible experience. The Book becomes the sole and absolute religious authority. Intellectualism and sensationalism are therefore the philosophical basis of the view that revelation is only through the Word. Campbell's belief that knowledge of God comes to man only through the revelation contained in the Bible, is therefore a consistent conclusion from Locke's theory of knowledge, but it is far from being in agreement with Locke's own conclusion on the subject, as expressed in the following words written in 1681 (Bourne's *Life of Locke*, p. 462):

AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION

“That there is a God and what that God is, nothing can discover in us, nor judge in us, but natural reason. For whatever discovery we receive any other way, must come originally from inspiration, which is an opinion or persuasion of the mind whereof a man knows not the use or reason, but is received there as a truth coming from an unknown and therefore a supernatural cause. But no such inspiration concerning God, or his worship, can be admitted for truth by him that thinks himself inspired, much less by any other whom he would persuade to believe him inspired, any further than it is conformable to reason; because where reason is not, I judge it is impossible for a man himself to distinguish betwixt inspiration and fancy, truth and error,—since nobody can doubt, from the contradiction and strangeness of opinion concerning God and religion in this world, that men are likely to have more frenzies than inspirations. Inspiration then, barely in itself, cannot be a ground to receive any doctrine not conformable to reason.”

The comparison of these statements with the view of Mr. Campbell that man by his natural reason can not have the slightest conception of God, will free him from any suspicion of having taken his views from Locke. It is quite a different thing to say that their philosophical basis was Lockian. The fact is that Locke's views of the natural reason.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

as an instrument for knowing God, were not consistent with the fundamental principles of his philosophy. The development of philosophical thought from Locke to Hume showed that, and Mr. Campbell profited by that history. In his method of accounting for man's knowledge of God, Campbell was a better Lockian than Locke himself.

So far the discussion has related solely to the means of communication between God and the individual of to-day, and that is found to be entirely through the Book. But the Book itself was given through human agency. It was written by human penmen. It remains to be considered what was the nature of the communication between God and the inspired men who indited the sacred volume; in other words, What was the nature and method of revelation?

What has preceded obviously excludes the assumption that the divine communication to the inspired writers was in any way analogous to the relation between God and the ordinary Christian, for the

AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION

latter is solely through the medium which the former produced. It therefore cannot be said that the inspiration of the writers was the same in kind as that which may be enjoyed by Christians to-day, only more intense in degree. But the inspired men were still men,—creatures who can receive communications only through the experience of the senses. Again the statement is significant that “revelation does not revolutionize man’s processes of knowledge, but only extends them,” *i. e.*, brings new elements into the world of sensible experience. With the Christian of to-day, the new element of sense experience is the Bible. The men who were inspired to write the Bible must have received direct from God some other kind of revelation to the senses. Revelation could only take place through sights and sounds. Since revelation is essentially the deliverance of *ideas* to men, and since a word is the sensible body of an idea, it may be said that Lockian sensationalism gives the philosophical basis

for the doctrine of verbal inspiration. This is the position, then, to which Mr. Campbell's philosophical presupposition logically led. Did he actually hold it?

It may be said without doing him injustice—in fact, it must be said to avoid doing him injustice—that all of his declarations on the subject cannot be combined into a single systematic and consistent theory. There are many passages in Mr. Campbell's writings which look in the direction of verbal inspiration, if indeed they do not directly affirm it. He speaks of the writers of Scripture as "penmen" (*Christian Baptist*, p. 200). He refers to the Holy Spirit as having "dictated" and "indited" the book. In regard to the means by which God has communicated with men in times past, he says that God spoke *vive voce* with Adam in the Garden and with Moses on Sinai. God taught the first man the use of speech by talking to him audibly. (*Christian Baptist*, p. 37.) The words of Newton are quoted approvingly, "God gave man

AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION

reason and religion by giving him the use of words." "When God spoke to man in his own language, he spoke as one person converses with another,—in the fair, stipulated and well-established meaning of the terms." (*Christian System*, p. 16.) Word and idea are conceived by Campbell, as by Locke, to be so inseparably connected that an idea cannot be said to exist without a word to represent it; much less can it be communicated without the use of the word which is the necessary means of making the requisite impression on the senses of the recipient. (*Christian System*, p. 23.) Hence revelation could not have come to the inspired writers without spoken words, any more than it can be communicated to men to-day by any other means than the written words of the record. The Spirit, in giving ideas to the writers, necessarily gave the words corresponding to them.

It is characteristic of Mr. Campbell's habit of mind that the question of the method of inspiration presented no diffi-

culties to him. Replying to a question as to how far the writers were indebted to the Spirit for the very words which they used, he says: "The burden of this query has occasioned considerable discussion amongst the more learned commentators and interpreters of Sacred Scripture. I cannot, however, discover any real difficulty in deciding the controversy or in answering the query." He then makes a twofold classification of Scripture into: *first*, accounts of things purely supernatural, including all religious teaching and laws; and *second*, records of natural, historical occurrences. In the first class, "the communication was made in words." In the second, the Spirit simply strengthened the memory, guided in the choice of documents and sources, and guaranteed the absolute accuracy of the account, but left the choice of words to the writer.

The use of this twofold division was convenient as affording a way of maintaining the complete inerrancy of the

AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION

Bible in all its parts, without holding the implausible theory that the Holy Spirit dictated accounts of events which men could write about quite accurately on the basis of their own recollections and available historical documents. The convenience of the division had brought it into use soon after the Protestant Reformation and almost as soon as emphasis began to be thrown upon the authority of Scripture. But it is a difficult theory to maintain on the basis of Locke's sensationalism, for on that theory of knowledge it is impossible for the Spirit to exercise any general oversight, such as "strengthening the memory," guarding against errors, etc., without conversing orally with the writer, which would amount to giving him a verbal revelation. Of course if he preferred to use his own words instead of those in which the Spirit spoke to him, it would be possible to do so; but it can scarcely be doubted that those who have held this theory, and Mr. Campbell among them, did not conceive of the Spirit as

giving verbal suggestions, warnings, reminders and corrections to the writers, but rather as exercising some undefined strengthening influence. A strict adherence to the logical outcome of sensationalism would have led to a view too rigid to have been either plausible or endurable; so he adopted a view which had much to recommend it, but which was not entirely in harmony with the philosophical basis.

As an off-set to the above quotations which appear to teach plenary verbal inspiration, the following may be cited (*Christian Baptist*, p. 344): "I do not believe that the book commonly called the Bible is properly denominated a divine revelation, or communication from the Deity to the human race. At the same time I am convinced that in this volume there are revelations or communications from the Deity to man." It will be noted that this is not unlike the current phrase that "the Bible is not the Word of God, but contains the Word of God."

AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION

The question of the criterion of revelation is well summed up in a single sentence (*Christian Baptist*, p. 546): "We have a right to sit in judgment over the credentials of Heaven's ambassador, but we have no right to sit in judgment over the information he gives us." It is the province of human reason to determine whether what claims to be divine revelation really bears the marks of its divine origin. The messages of Jesus and of certain of the prophets were proven to be divine by their miracles, and the well attested accounts of these miracles are the chief evidence to-day of the reality of the revelation which accompanied them. The criterion is based entirely on the senses. The miracles appeal to the senses and can therefore have weight with the reason. The revelation itself pertains to a realm of which the senses cannot take cognizance, and therefore it cannot be tested by its conformity to human reason. The test of divine revelation is not in its effects; it is not internal to man, but external.

Coleridge made the supreme test of religion internal. "I accept the Bible as divine because it *finds* me. . . . It is inspired because it inspires."

The Rules for Interpretation, which Mr. Campbell laid down (*Christian System*, p. 16), exhibit two influences. *First*, the distinction between the covenants leads to a consequent discrimination in the use of the documents of the different dispensations. This was perhaps his most important exegetical principle, and its connection with the work of Cocceius has already been pointed out. *Second*, the common-sense empirical method, which Bacon applied to science and Locke to philosophy, is reflected in those rules which look to careful observation of the original meaning of each word, the noting of the time, place, circumstances, and purpose of each utterance. These rules, simple and obvious as they are, are nothing less than an application of the Baconian method of observation and deduction to the interpretation of the Bible. Every

AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION

verse, every statement of fact in the record, is to be considered as a scientific phenomenon. It is to be observed as Bacon observed the facts of nature, and from this mass of particular instances, gathered by the empirical method, are to be deduced the general truths of religion and the laws of the church.

The truths thus deduced from the New Testament are the sole authority for Christian doctrine, and the precepts of the apostles and the precedent of the Apostolic church are the authority for polity. But all sects pretend to draw their opposing views from the Bible. The trouble, says Mr. Campbell, arises because they do not state the doctrines in the language of Scripture. "Now, suppose that all these would abandon every word and sentence not found in the Bible and, without explanation, limitation or enlargement, quote with equal pleasure and readiness and apply on every suitable occasion every word and sentence found in the volume; how long would divisions exist? It would be im-

possible to perpetuate them on this plan." And again: "On the subject of religion I am fully persuaded that nothing but the inspired Scriptures ought ever to have been published." (*Christian Baptist*, p. 259).

This language, if its force were not modified by Mr. Campbell's own practice, would indicate that the Bible is an authority to be quoted merely and not interpreted, and the application of this method would lay an embargo upon all theological thought. And this would be consistent, too, with the theory of knowledge which limits the scope of man's rational powers to things perceivable by the senses.

As the text of the New Testament is the absolute authority for doctrine, so the precedent of the Apostolic church is a law to the church for polity and worship. Since the primitive order is authoritative, the need of the church is for "a restoration of the Ancient Order of Things." The religion of Christ

AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION

cannot be reformed; it can only be restored.

The great prominence into which the term "authority" is brought by Mr. Campbell, prepares one for the assertion that the Bible is essentially a "law-book." Since it contains every spiritual idea known to man, and presents a perfect revelation of God and of the will of Christ, it is to be conceived of as the codified law of an absolute monarch; not as a record of religious experiences, but as the source of all religion. Those who called the first day of the week "Sabbath" and cited the Fourth Commandment as authority for its observance, were criticised, not because their spirit was legalistic, but because they mixed two laws and obeyed neither. The Christian law was expressed in the apostolic custom of breaking bread every Lord's day, and this law was as rigidly binding upon Christians as the law of the Sabbath had been upon the Jews.

This somewhat legalistic conception of Christianity is not to be entirely ac-

counted for by any one or two causes. Its proximate cause was the urgent need of an interpretation of religion which could be presented in a simple set of positive rules. The aspect of Christianity which is simplest, most readily grasped and most easily defended, is its legal aspect, and it was that phase accordingly which received most immediate emphasis.

With Campbell's emphasis upon the will of Christ, expressed in the form of laws and codified in the New Testament as the ultimate seat of religious authority, it is worth while to compare those English ethical theories which, from the time of Hobbes, had found the ultimate ethical authority to be some form of law. With Hobbes, morality consisted in conformity to the will of the sovereign. With Locke it was obedience to the triple law of God, the state, and public opinion. Butler and Paley emphasized the theological reference and made the will of God the authority for ethics. Mr. Campbell transferred the same principle

to religion, including Christian doctrine and church polity, and considered the Bible as the complete and final expression of the will of God on these topics. The *Christian Baptist* rings with the denunciation of the clergy, because, by assuming for themselves the sole right of interpretation, they had virtually usurped the authority of Scripture.

With respect to the problem of the seat of authority in religion, Mr. Campbell's position affords an instructive comparison and contrast with the Neo-Catholicism of the Oxford Movement, led by Newman, Pusey and Froude. Both were reactionary movements against the extreme individualism of the eighteenth century philosophy and its self-confessed failure to give knowledge of ultimate reality or religious truth. Both Newman and Campbell took it at its word. Since, then, man cannot find within himself the basis for either certainty or unity of religious belief, recourse must be had to an external authority. Newman conceives the

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

church to be the agent for transmitting the will of God to men, and what is transmitted is the *grace* of God, an uplifting influence which makes it appeal rather to man's emotions than to his intellect. With Campbell, on the other hand, this external authority is lodged in the Bible, which is the repository for a deposit of divine revelation in the form of ideas and commands to be apprehended by the intellect.

CHAPTER VI
Faith and Repentance

FAITH AND REPENTANCE.

- I. CONTROVERSY ON NATURE OF FAITH:
 - 1. Hervey: Moravian—Methodism mysticism.
 - 2. Sandeman and McLean: intellectualism.
 - 3. Fuller: a mediating position.
 - 4. Degenerate mysticism of Campbell's day.
- II. MR. CAMPBELL'S VIEW:
 - 1. Faith—belief of testimony.
 - 2. Repentance is reformation.
 - 3. Relation of repentance to faith.
- III. CAMPBELL TRANSCENDS HIS OWN THEOLOGY:
 - 1. Includes effects in causes.
 - 2. Conversion is an unbroken process.
 - 3. His theological definition of faith was Lockian intellectualism; his religious use of faith centered in person of Christ.

NOTE.—On the relation of Alexander Campbell's view of faith to the eighteenth century controversy, many valuable suggestions may be found in Longan's *Origin of the Disciples of Christ*, a volume which is in all respects the most significant contribution which has yet been made to the philosophical history of the Disciples.

FAITH AND REPENTANCE.

In the eighteenth century there arose in England a notable controversy in regard to the nature of faith. James Hervey, a member of John Wesley's society at Oxford, which was nicknamed the "Godly Club" and which was the seed of Methodism, wrote the "Dialogues between Theron and Aspasio," in which he expounded the Methodist-Moravian conception of faith. The essential feature of this view was its emphasis upon that item of Christian experience which he called the "sense of adoption," and the identification of this emotional condition with "saving faith." There are two elements to be noted in this view: *first*, it makes faith a state of feeling, rather than an act of the intellect; *second*, it places faith at the end of the process of conversion, rather than at its beginning.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

Hervey's book called forth many replies and objections, and the opponents of his view may be divided into two classes according as they opposed one or both of the above mentioned positions. Robert Sandeman, whose name is familiar through his connection with the Scotch sect known as Sandemanians, opposed both parts of Hervey's thesis. He maintained that faith is distinctly an act of the intellect, in which it apprehends truth through the acceptance of testimony; and that the change of heart and feeling, which constitutes the assurance of salvation, is the effect of faith. Faith is therefore given the first place in the *ordo salutis*. This view was also adopted by McLean, a representative Scotch Baptist.

A second protest against Hervey's view came from Andrew Fuller, an acknowledged leader of the progressive English Baptists. In his book entitled "The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation," he asserts that faith is simply belief of what God has said and that the

FAITH AND REPENTANCE

assurance of salvation, which comes as an emotional experience, is something quite distinct from faith; but he still maintains, like Hervey, that faith stands at the end of the process and must be preceded by repentance, which is defined as an emotional experience, a change of heart.

The controversy was maintained with some vigor through the eighteenth century. Fuller's mediating position found few supporters, and the parties to the controversy found it easier to maintain one or the other of the extreme positions. The much needed evangelical revival, which Wesleyanism was instrumental in advancing, gave a distinct practical advantage for the time to that view which emphasized the emotional element of religion, and that portion of the religious world which considered itself especially evangelical gave general acceptance to Hervey's view of both the nature and the place of faith.

Such was the situation in America at the time when Mr. Campbell began his

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

work. In revolting against that view of religion which was cold and formal and gave inadequate recognition to the importance of a change of heart, there was developed a Protestant mysticism which was, in Mr. Campbell's opinion, unreasonable, untrue and confusing. Instead of presenting to the sinner certain facts, backed up by testimony and supported by evidence, and telling him first to believe these facts, and then to make his belief of them the basis for a change in his manner of life, and to let his feelings take care of themselves, they sought first to arouse a sense of sinfulness, then a feeling of penitence which was expected to be accompanied by deep despondence, until there came a demonstration of divine forgiving grace which manifested itself in an emotional "assurance of forgiveness,"—and this was "saving faith." The theological foundation for this popular mysticism was found in Hervey's definition of faith. The removal of these abuses, as Mr. Campbell considered them, demanded

FAITH AND REPENTANCE

the introduction of a different conception of faith. Longan says (*Origin of the Disciples of Christ*, p. 73) that Campbell's view of faith and the priority of change of heart to faith was "the most fundamental conception of what may be called his theology." We have found it necessary to consider his conception of the Kingdom of God as lying at the center of his formulation of the Christian system; but in considering the process of entering the Kingdom of God, undoubtedly the idea of the nature of faith and its relative position was his most fundamental conception.

The documents of this eighteenth century controversy were carefully studied by Mr. Campbell, and when he undertook the formulation of his views upon faith, it was with a full acquaintance with what had already been said on both sides of the subject. His teaching in regard to faith may be stated as follows:

"Faith is the belief of testimony. Where testimony begins, faith begins; and where testimony ends, faith ends."

As we get all knowledge of the external world through the five senses, so we get our acquaintance with all other facts through testimony. Faith, therefore, is equivalent to an extension of sense perception. History and narrative are only other names for testimony. There is only one kind of faith, and that is historical faith, because it is the acceptance of an historical record. The validity of faith is tested by the evidences of genuineness which the testimony brings with it. The differences and degrees of value which attach to different beliefs, depend solely upon the facts which are believed. The facts which are the object of Christian faith are summed up in the proposition that "Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God." Faith in that fact is saving faith, because it is faith in a saving fact. As it is not eating that keeps the body alive, but the food that is eaten; so we are not saved by the act of believing, but by the facts of the Gospel which we are able, by faith, to apply to our own salvation. Hence when we

FAITH AND REPENTANCE

say we are "justified by faith," faith is not to be understood as a meritorious act in reward for which salvation is granted, for that would reduce justification by faith to a mere particular phase of justification by good works. On this point Campbell differed radically from Sandeman and McLean, who held that justification by faith excludes the efficacy of all holy dispositions after the first act of faith, and that "the bare belief of the bare truth" is imputed to us for righteousness.

As faith is simply belief of testimony, it comes about in a purely natural way whenever sufficient testimony is presented. It is useless to attempt to make men believe by threats, persuasion, exhortation, or emotional excitement. "No person can help believing when sufficient evidence is presented and no man can believe without evidence." "Such is the constitution of the human mind that a man is as passive in believing as he was in receiving his name, or as the eye is in receiving the rays of

light that fall upon it from the sun; consequently no man can help believing when the evidence of truth arrests his attention." (*Christian Baptist*, p. 142.) This extreme statement was intended to emphasize the naturalness of the origin of faith when evidence is presented, and to show that no exercise of divine power is needed to create faith in each individual. It is therefore unnecessary and inappropriate to pray for faith. If a man wants faith, all he has to do is to lay aside his blinding prejudices and examine the evidence and the testimony. Though the eye is passive in receiving the rays of light, yet a man has the power to open his eyes. The human will has power over the act of belief, because it has control of the conditions which precede belief. Unbelief is voluntary blindness; it is sin. On this point again Mr. Campbell differed from the Sandemanians, who had maintained that special spiritual influences were necessary to produce in each individual that belief of divine testimony which constitutes faith.

FAITH AND REPENTANCE

While Campbell agreed with Sandeman in two important points in regard to faith, viz., its nature and its place in the order of events, it will be seen that he differed from him on two others equally important: the value of faith, and the way in which it is produced. The last point especially was the one which gave its distinctive character to his method of presenting the Gospel.

Mr. Campbell's views of faith, of repentance, and of the relation between the two, are so closely and logically connected that it is impossible to set forth one apart from the others. That view of faith which had considered it the last stage in the process of conversion and something for which the sinner must wait until it pleased God to give it to him, necessarily considered repentance as a sorrow which could find no immediate issue in reformation. Repentance came before faith, and it was separated from reformation by a period of waiting and seeking for the assurance of pardon. But when Campbell put faith first,

reformation could follow immediately. His own definition of repentance is comprehensive and fully indicative of the practical character which he ascribed to it.

To the Jews repentance meant "change your views of the person and character of the Messiah and change your behavior toward him; put yourselves under his government and guidance, and obey him." To the Gentiles it meant "change your views of the character of God and of his government, and receive his Son as his ambassador; and yield him the required homage by receiving his favor and honoring his institutions. This is reformation towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."

This statement indicates not only the practical character of repentance, as Mr. Campbell conceived it, but the extreme difficulty which he experienced in separating the various items in the process of salvation for purposes of definition. Beginning with an attempt to define repentance, he ends by stating that what

FAITH AND REPENTANCE

he has defined is both faith and repentance. And yet there is no difficulty in understanding his thought; and this very tendency to unite the elements even in definition, indicates how close was the union between them in his mind. The test of faith is in its fruitage of reformation. The value of reformation is that it springs from faith. The change of heart and the change of life are so inseparable that the two are united under a single name,—repentance.

It was characteristic of Mr. Campbell's mode of thought to include effects with causes in a manner which did not conduce to clearness of definition. So, after defining faith as simply the acceptance of confirmed testimony, he says elsewhere that faith includes trust or confidence, because belief of statements about Christ leads to trust in him. Likewise repentance is made to include not only sorrow for sins and the resolution to forsake sin, but also the actual reformation of life, which is the test of

the genuineness of the resolution. In any case, it was his purpose to guard against the idea that repentance was a mere feeling. The emotional element must be kept in the background to insure emphasis upon the practical outcome which was desired.

This apparent confusion of definitions has the further value of representing in a very life-like way the fact that these several acts, which analysis may isolate and theological science may define separately, are really parts of one connected and unbroken process. Conversion is a change of the whole man. It is a section of human life, and life is always both a concrete and a complex thing. No definitions of faith or repentance or regeneration, however accurate as analyses of the psychological phenomena, can be adequate, if they represent these several items as so far disconnected that they can be defined without reference to each other. A picture of a moving body, to be accurate, must show the motion as well as the body that moves;

FAITH AND REPENTANCE

and a definition of the elements of a complex psychological process, such as conversion, must exhibit the continuity of the process, even at the expense of the clearness of some of the details.

It was a wholesome realization of the importance of representing the whole process of conversion as a vital unity, that saved Mr. Campbell from falling into the intellectualism which was warranted by his philosophical presuppositions. When faith is isolated for definition, it is conceived in a purely intellectual form as the acquisition of information through testimony, the acceptance of certain propositions as true. Applying strictly this theological definition, the object of faith is certainly not a person but statements about a person. Campbell's Lockian conception of faith stopped here. But he saw at once that, considering faith not as an isolated mental act, but as the first step in a change of the whole man, the acceptance of a certain proposition about Jesus led immediately to a certain attitude of

the person toward him as a person. For religious purposes, the object of faith is the person of Jesus in whom the believer is to trust as a Savior. But the theological definition seldom gets beyond the assertion that faith in Jesus is acceptance of a certain proposition about him. It can be said therefore that, as regards the conception of faith, his theological position was a thorough intellectualism; but the practical application of that intellectualism was to counteract a deteriorated Protestant mysticism, and in its highest religious uses it issues in a lofty conception of faith as trust in a person. This is not the only case in which Mr. Campbell transcends the limits of his own theology and gives recognition to truths which cannot easily be fitted into his system of thought.

CHAPTER VII

Baptism

BAPTISM.

I. DEVELOPMENT OF CAMPBELL'S VIEW OF BAPTISM :

1. Influences in Ireland and Scotland.
2. Declaration and Address—its logical consequences.
3. Immersion of penitent believers.
4. Development of design of baptism:
 - (1) Walker Debate, 1820,—“connected with remission”.
 - (2) McCalla Debate, 1823,—design of baptism clearly stated, but only as argument for believers' baptism.
 - (3) Rice Debate, 1843,—baptism for remission, a separate issue.

II. CAMPBELL'S FINAL DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM:

1. Antecedents—objective and subjective.
2. Action—immersion.
3. Subjects—penitent believers.
4. Design—remission, a change of *state*.

III. INFLUENCE OF THE SOURCES.

BAPTISM.

Since Mr. Campbell's final view of the nature and significance of the ordinance of baptism is in some important particulars unlike that of any system current during his formative period, certainly no exception can be made in this case to the assertion that his view was not borrowed directly from any source. In the consideration of this doctrine and the relation which Mr. Campbell's view bore to those influences which we have called his sources, it will be especially apparent that he was indebted to those sources for suggestions and principles, but not for products.

In a general way it may be said that, in his final view, Mr. Campbell agreed with the Baptists as to the form and subjects of baptism, while as to its significance he sought a *via media* between baptismal regeneration, which as ordi-

narly interpreted means a species of magic, and the Baptist theory that the rite is a symbol of a change which has already taken place in a man.

The historical development of Mr. Campbell's doctrine of baptism can be traced with more completeness than the growth of any other of his ideas. Thomas Campbell was a minister in the Anti-Burgher branch of the Seceder section of the Presbyterian Church, and under the influence of this religious body Alexander grew to manhood. This body held fast to the view of baptism which was at that time considered orthodox by all Protestants except the Baptists. He was sprinkled in infancy, as a youth "fell under conviction" in the usual way, had all the ordinary religious experience of the time, with rather more than the usual fervor, and became an active member of the church. The subject of baptism never came up for consideration in the early days in Ireland before Thomas Campbell emigrated to Pennsylvania.

BAPTISM

The only disturbing element among the religious influences of that period came from the Independents of Rich Hill, a congregation of free and unconventional thinkers who had received an impulse from the eighteenth century Evangelical Movement in England, and whose zeal and love of liberty had been quickened by visits from such bold spirits as the free-lance evangelist, Rowland Hill. The period of sympathetic contact with this congregation assisted in whetting Alexander Campbell's appetite for new truth, but the subject of baptism was not one which came under discussion.

After the emigration of Thomas Campbell to America, a series of fortunate accidents, culminating in shipwreck off the west coast of Scotland, brought Alexander to Glasgow for nearly a year. It was through his acquaintance with the Rich Hill Independents that he received a letter of introduction to Mr. Greville Ewing of Glasgow, and it was through Mr. Ewing that he came in

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

touch with one of the most important practical religious movements of the day under the leadership of the Haldane brothers. Beginning with a sincere desire to preach the Gospel to the heathen, in an age when both the established and the Seceder churches in Scotland refused to countenance any foreign missionary enterprise, these two brothers, both men of wealth, themselves became a missionary society and a board or ministerial education.

The religious condition of Scotland at the beginning of the nineteenth century was comparable to that of England at the beginning of the eighteenth, and the remedial measures were not unlike. Wesleyanism and the Evangelical revival shook Anglicanism from her slumber; the evangelistic campaign supported by the Haldanes was part of the movement by which religion in Scotland was revived after the reign of Moderatism. It was not a theological movement, and considerable discrepancies in theological opinion actually existed

BAPTISM

among the several participants. It was primarily a religious quickening, and it issued in the formation of several congregations which were conspicuous for their zeal for evangelization and good works, and for their disregard of the lifeless formalism and dogmatism which characterized both the established church and the seceders.

The subject of baptism had come into prominence among this group of men shortly after Mr. Campbell reached Glasgow. James A. Haldane had been immersed the previous year and his brother Robert soon followed his example. The Glasites, a Scottish sect which arose early in the eighteenth century, had adopted immersion some years before and were very strict about it, as they were about all points of their discipline. They had come to be called "Scotch Baptists", though their origin and their tenets were different from those of the regular Baptists. The congregation of Independents in Glasgow under David Dale (the father-in-law of Robert Owen)

had split twice on the question of immersion and some other matters. Mr. Ewing, on the other hand, though he was working with the Haldanes, remained a firm adherent to the old position, and there resulted a division in the Haldane church in Glasgow. The immersionist wing was willing to tolerate pedobaptists, but the pedobaptists, headed by Mr. Ewing, would not tolerate the immersionists. Mr. Innes, who came to preach for the pedobaptist branch, changed his views and went over to the other party, and so did William Stevens, who was in charge of the Haldanes' Edinburgh Seminary.

Such were the agitations to which this question was giving rise at this time. But in spite of this fact, there is no evidence that Alexander Campbell seriously considered the question of baptism at this time. His close association with Mr. Greville Ewing did not prevent him from siding with the Haldanes in some controversies on matters of administration which disturbed their

BAPTISM

friendly relations at that time, and it is certain that he did not imbibe from Mr. Ewing the latter's deep-seated aversion to immersion. Although on some other matters he found himself out of accord with the denomination in which he had been reared, and before leaving Glasgow definitely renounced the communion of the Seceder Presbyterian Church, it appears that in regard to baptism he held to his original view, while looking with a spirit of easy-going toleration upon those who adopted immersion.

While Alexander Campbell was in Glasgow, his father, in western Pennsylvania, wrote his Declaration and Address, the primary aim of which was to promote union, and the fundamental principle of which was expressed in the aphorism, "Where the Scriptures speak we speak, where the Scriptures are silent we are silent." When this principle was enunciated by Thomas Campbell for the first time, one of his auditors, Andrew Munro, a Presbyterian, arose in the congregation and said that the prin-

ciple was dangerous, for it would require the giving up of the practice of infant baptism. Mr. Campbell said he would be willing to give it up if it was not in the Bible, but felt assured that it could be supported by Scriptural authority. He admitted that it was hard to frame a positive argument for it, but urged long precedent, that there was no reason to be in a hurry to abandon it, that it should be made a matter of forbearance, that form was not essential and that baptism was not a matter of prime importance like faith and righteousness. His only positive argument for the baptism of infants was the analogy with circumcision.

It was at this point that Alexander Campbell arrived from Scotland. On reading the proof-sheets of the Declaration and Address, he was confronted with the question of infant baptism. A Presbyterian preacher, a Mr. Riddle, with whom he consulted, warned him that the principles laid down in the Address would make him a Baptist.

BAPTISM

With a view to disproving this assertion for his own peace of mind, Mr. Campbell secured all the books he could find on the subject from the pedobaptist standpoint, and gave them a thorough study. Contrary to his expectation and intention, he emerged from this study convinced that there was no scriptural authority for infant baptism. Still he allowed his father to persuade him for a time that there was no need to make a disturbance about it; that it was not worth while to split the church over the question, or to demand immersion of those who had already been sprinkled as infants, or to be immersed themselves.

The position was, of course, an illogical one, considering the principles of the Declaration and Address, and it could not have continued long. The events which followed forced them to assume a more consistent attitude. Thomas Campbell was rejected by the Synod of Pittsburg because he said that infant baptism was unauthorized. In reviewing this action of the Synod, Alexander Camp-

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

bell for the first time formulated and systematized his views on the subject. Some members of the Brush Run congregation, which had been organized on the principles of the Declaration and Address, insisted on being immersed and Thomas Campbell reluctantly consented to act, but did not go into the water himself. The birth of Alexander Campbell's first child forced upon him the question as to whether he should christen it. A thorough re-study of the whole question was made. A short time before, in a sermon on the Commission, he had stated that it was not scriptural to make it a term of communion, so he let it slip. Now he reached the conclusion that he was an unbaptized man and that it was an important matter. The child was not christened, and Thomas and Alexander Campbell were immersed.

The question of the form of baptism and its importance as a scriptural term of fellowship, had now been settled. On both of these topics, the position taken was precisely that of the Baptists, but

BAPTISM

it will be seen from the preceding sketch that the direct influence of Baptist teaching played a very small part, if any at all, in the development of Mr. Campbell's views on the subject of baptism. It was natural that the congregation, which had advanced to this position with the Campbells, should seek and find fellowship among the Baptists. The points yet to be worked out were the prerequisites and the design of baptism, and it was at these points that there were developed divergences from the accepted Baptist doctrines, which issued finally in the separation of the new movement from that denomination.

The working out of the design of baptism may be said to have been accomplished in three periods, marked by an increasing clearness in the explanation of the phrase, "baptism for the remission of sins," and by an increasing emphasis upon the importance of this conception in the Christian system. As the doctrine was worked out in debates for polemic use, so the phases of its devel-

opment are to be traced in three great debates: first, the Walker debate in 1820; second, the McCalla debate in 1823; third, the Rice debate in 1843.

(1) In the debate with Mr. Walker, in which Mr. Campbell appeared as the champion of the Baptist position against a Presbyterian, Walker's sole argument for infant baptism was based on the analogy between baptism and circumcision, involving the presupposition that the covenant on which the Christian Church is built is the same as that on which the Jewish Church was built. Mr. Campbell endeavored, by making the distinction between the dispensations, to overthrow the basis of this argument. He objected to the statement that baptism is the seal of the covenant as circumcision had been with the Jews. He said: "Baptism is connected with the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit." This general statement of the design of the ordinance was not in this debate elaborated or further defined, and it is used only as an argu-

BAPTISM

ment against the baptism of infants. The Baptists were satisfied with the outcome of the debate and the virtual defeat of their opponent, but they were not altogether pleased with the arguments by which the victory had been won.

(2) The debate with Mr. McCalla dealt with the same questions as that with Mr. Walker and in much the same way. We find here a distinct affirmation that baptism is for the remission of sins and an exposition of that doctrine, including the distinction between real and formal remission of sins. He says: "I know it will be said that I have affirmed that baptism *saves* us. Well, Peter and Paul have said so before me." (Richardson's *Memoirs*, II., p. 81.) Again: "The blood of Jesus Christ then *really* cleanses us from all sin. Behold the goodness of God in giving us a *formal* token of it, by ordaining baptism expressly for the remission of sins." "Paul's sins were *really* pardoned when he believed, yet he had no solemn pledge of the fact, no *formal* acquittal, no formal purgation of

his sins, till he had washed them away in the water of baptism." (Richardson's *Memoirs*, II., p. 82.) The remission, both real and formal, has reference to the personal sins of the individual, and does not refer to inherited "original sin"; hence it does not apply to infants. It is to be noted that although the design of baptism is here fairly developed, it is still used only as an argument to prove the invalidity of infant baptism.

(3) The period of the publication of the Christian Baptist saw a further working out of the design of baptism, the effect of which was to give greater prominence in Mr. Campbell's system to those ideas which had been previously developed. Perhaps the most important factor in bringing about this increased emphasis on the doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins, was the influence of Walter Scott, who, in 1827, gave system to a mass of ideas which had been previously worked out, by proclaiming the *ordo salutis*—faith, repentance and baptism—and the relation in which these

BAPTISM

several factors stand one to another. Faith is the change in mental attitude; repentance the change in the ideal of life and the beginning of the change in conduct; baptism produces the change in state whereby the penitent believer receives formal pardon for his sins. Mr. Campbell at once adopted this arrangement, the separate elements of which he had already enunciated, but which he had not yet arranged systematically, and thenceforth the teaching of baptism by immersion of believers only becomes rather a corollary of the doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins; instead of the latter being, as before, merely an argument for the support of the former. This added emphasis upon the design of baptism is seen in the debate with Mr. Rice in 1843, in which Mr. Campbell maintained as a separate proposition that "Christian baptism is for the remission of past sins." And in *Christian Baptism* (p. 248) he says: "The design of this institution has long been thrown in the shade because of the wordy and im-

passioned controversy about what the action is, and who may be the proper subject of it. Whatever importance there may be in settling these questions, that importance is wholly to be appreciated by the design of the institution. This is the only value of it."

An understanding of Mr. Campbell's final position on the doctrine is to be reached by a study of the *Christian System* (1835), the debate with Rice (1843) and *Christian Baptism* (1852). The subject may conveniently be considered under the divisions which are employed in *Christian Baptism*.

1. The *antecedents* of baptism may be classified as objective and subjective antecedents. The objective antecedent is the Bible, in which baptism is enjoined as a direct command of Christ, a "peculiar and positive ordinance." The authority of Christ as a lawgiver and of the New Testament as his law-book is the first presupposition. Baptism is a "positive," as distinguished from a "moral," requirement; the virtue and value of it

BAPTISM

lie, not in any inherent fitness of the ordinance, but in the fact that it is commanded. The subjective antecedents represent the attitude of the individual toward the truth and toward his own past sins in the light of the truth; they are faith and repentance.

2. The *action* is immersion in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The arguments for this are chiefly philological, and these are worked out with a degree of thoroughness which leaves little to be added on the subject.

3. The *subjects* of baptism are penitent believers; i. e., those who have fulfilled the requirements presented as subjective antecedents.

4. The *design* of baptism, or the change which it is intended to effect, is "the remission of sins." The use of this Biblical phrase in connection with baptism has been a cause of much offense and many accusations. If it were meant that baptism, and baptism alone, produces the entire change in man whereby he passes from the condition of

a condemned sinner to that of a pardoned saint, he would be rightly accused of teaching baptismal regeneration, in the ordinary sense of the term. He is saved from that by making a distinction between the *state* of a man and the *character* of a man, and between *real* and *formal* remission of sins. These two distinctions are closely connected. Real remission expresses God's attitude toward the past sins of a man who has changed his character through faith and repentance. Formal remission expresses God's attitude toward those sins when the man has changed also his state; i. e., has entered the state of sonship or of citizenship in the kingdom of God, through fulfillment of the positive requirements which are the conditions of entrance.

This distinction, which avoids baptismal regeneration, is not to be interpreted as belittling baptism, by making it effect a *mere* change of state, for the entrance into the new state is a matter of importance. It is necessary for the en-

BAPTISM

joyment of its privileges. Mr. Campbell's standing illustration of this was the analogy of a foreigner coming to this country. He may believe in our government and give it the allegiance of his heart, but he cannot enjoy the privileges of citizenship until he has changed his state from that of an alien to that of a citizen, by naturalization through the process duly prescribed by law. Baptism, like naturalization, is the formal oath of allegiance by which an alien becomes a citizen. In neither case does the form in itself effect any magical change in the subject's disposition. In both cases a change of opinion and of affections is presupposed, and the form is the culmination of a process.

With this distinction between character and state, compare the distinction between positive and moral precepts. Remission of sins follows immersion, just as the falling of the walls of Jericho followed the blowing of the rams' horns. In both cases the fulfillment of the divine promise was conditioned upon

obedience to a positive divine ordinance. Although Mr. Campbell points out the symbolical meaning of the ordinance of baptism, he lays the emphasis not upon its spiritual significance, but upon the fact that it has been commanded. The erection of this particular form into a condition of remission is sufficiently explained by saying that "it is as easy for God to forgive us our sins in the act of immersion as in any other way."

Although there was a large measure of originality in Mr. Campbell's method of handling the question of baptism, yet there may be seen in it the influence of some of the conceptions which he had received.

1. One of his strongest arguments against infant baptism was the denial that baptism was the counterpart of circumcision and that therefore the rules which applied to the latter could be applied also to the former. Proper emphasis upon the distinction between the Jewish and Christian dispensations, with the consequent establishment of the

BAPTISM

principle that the laws of the new covenant are to be sought only in the documents pertaining to the period subsequent to its formation, disposed of this argument. And it not only swept out of the way the argument from the Old Testament for the baptism of infants, but it cleared the way for a larger view of the significance of the ordinance, which would not be limited by the significance of the Jewish rite. The bearing of the Covenant Theology, as originated by Cocceius and developed in Holland and Scotland, upon this distinction between the dispensations, has already been pointed out.

2. In his constant emphasis upon Christianity as a *law*, and especially upon the laws of naturalization, and most especially upon the positive law of baptism, there is, as has been already suggested, a reminder of the general tone of English thought in the eighteenth century, in which law was the highest category of both ethics and religion. Campbell's teaching in regard to baptism

might be brought under Paley's statement of the criterion and motive of right conduct,—to obey the expressed will of God, as a law, in the hope of an eternal reward, as a motive.

3. The distinction between *moral* and *positive* precepts, which comes out prominently in assigning to baptism its place in relation to other Christian duties, is a theological interpretation of the old distinction between law of nature and law of society, as stated by Hugo Grotius and as embodied in the social contract theory of the origin of society. There is no conceivable condition of humanity in which men would not be amenable to the moral laws; they are unconditional and unchanging. But the positive laws of God's covenants with men not only change with the successive dispensations, but they belong to an order of things which is purely remedial and would never have existed, had man not fallen from the original estate in which he existed only under moral law. This is closely analogous to that

BAPTISM

form of the social contract theory which conceives of men as existing originally only under the natural law of human rights, but later forming governments and coming under the law of society, in order to escape the evils which had followed from the abuse of natural rights.

4. The ordinances were conceived by Mr. Campbell to derive their spiritual value, aside from what they possessed as mere acts of obedience to positive precepts, from the fact that they presented the facts of the gospel in concrete form to the senses. On a sensational theory of knowledge, any type or symbol receives added importance because of the appeal which it makes to the senses. The connection of this Lockian theory of knowledge with his high estimate of the ordinances was recognized by Mr. Campbell himself, for, in speaking of the perpetuity of the Lord's Supper and baptism, he said: "So long as the five senses are the five avenues to the human understanding and the medium of all divine communication to the spirit of

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

man, so long will it be necessary to use them in the cultivation of piety and humanity.”

CHAPTER VIII

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Conversion and Regeneration

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION AND REGENERATION.

I. THE PRACTICAL IMPULSE:

1. Revolt against mystical doctrine of Holy Spirit.
2. Desire to make a statement which would be
(a) practically satisfactory, (b) Biblical,
(c) consistent with his view of the nature
of man.

II. WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN MAKING CHRIS- TIAN:

1. Negative statement—points opposed.
2. Positive statement: (a) Spirit of Wisdom
gives testimony through Word. (b) Spirit
of Power gives evidence through miracles,
gifts and prophecy.
3. Consistent Lockianism so far.

III. WORK OF SPIRIT ON CHRISTIANS:

1. Rice debate—*all* work of Spirit is through
Word. Arguments: (a) Constitution of
man. (b) All spiritual ideas come from
Bible.
2. Different definitions of "regeneration."
3. Recognition of spiritual influences which
must be prayed for—un-Lockian.
4. No philosophy of prayer in sensationalism.

IV. SUMMARY OF LOCKIAN INFLUENCES:

1. Protest against "metaphysical regeneration."
2. Influence of Spirit only through sensible
means.
3. Emotions not a criterion.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION AND RE- GENERATION.

It will be impossible to avoid repeating some points here which have already been mentioned in treating of faith and repentance and baptism, since, according to the definition by which Mr. Campbell most consistently abides, conversion, justification, regeneration and sanctification are synonymous names for that total process, of which faith and repentance and baptism are component parts.

No principle was more fundamental to Mr. Campbell's religious thinking than his opposition to that baneful form of mysticism which was current in his day. Stated in barest outline, the situation was this: The doctrine of the total depravity of the human race through the sin of Adam—a doctrine which Calvin had inherited from Augustine and which the

Protestant world had received and perpetuated—was interpreted as implying that fallen man was in some way incapacitated for the reception of the truth; that he could not believe the truth of the Gospel on the testimony of the Scriptures and could not repent of his sins, until the Holy Spirit, acting directly upon his heart, without any sensible agency, had changed its nature and restored to it the lost power of believing. This change was called regeneration, or sometimes conversion. Since this was the first step in becoming a Christian, and since there was no specified way for a man to bring it about, and no way of knowing that it had been brought about except by the way he felt, the whole process was necessarily blocked in case a man did not feel as he thought a regenerated person ought to feel. The result was an agonizing period of “seeking,” and sometimes a dire despair of salvation, on the part of persons who had heard and believed the Gospel and repented of their sins.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In opposition to this, Mr. Campbell aimed to develop a conception of the work of the Spirit which would be free from this practical danger to religion, would be in accordance with Scripture, and would harmonize with his view of the constitution of man. A doctrine of the Holy Spirit, to meet the religious requirements must, first, provide a method by which the individual may become a Christian by following a plain and definite program and without waiting until there is performed upon him some action which he himself can not determine; and second, it must recognize the continual dependence of the Christian upon God for the grace to enable him to advance toward Christian perfection. To harmonize with his view of the nature and constitution of man, it must be in accordance with the psychology which is contained in Locke's *Essay*. We shall see that, so far as it was possible to construct a theory which met both the religious and the philosophical requirements, Campbell's view

of the Holy Spirit is logical and systematic. But when Locke's philosophy proved inadequate to explain operations of the Spirit which he considered necessary and scriptural, the philosophy was abandoned (as Locke himself had abandoned it in emergencies) and his theology becomes illogical and inconsistent with itself. It may be doubted whether he was conscious of his temporary desertion of the Lockian standpoint, but the fact of the desertion is obvious. In the consideration of this doctrine, therefore, both the extent and the limitations of Mr. Campbell's Lockianism will be apparent.

Campbell's reaction against the mysticism which characterized the then current religious systems received an early stimulus from his association with the Haldanes in Glasgow. James A. Haldane gives the following account of his own religious experience (*Richardson* I., p. 156): "Gradually becoming more dissatisfied with myself, being convinced especially of the sin of unbelief,

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

I wearied myself with looking for some wonderful change to take place, some inward feeling by which I might know that I was born again. The method of resting simply on the promises of God, which are yea and amen in Jesus Christ, was too plain and easy, and like Naaman the Syrian, instead of bathing in the waters of Jordan and being clean, I would have some great work in my mind to substitute in place of Jesus Christ." The practical bent of the Haldane movement and the common-sense view of religion which was encouraged by it, made it natural that they should depart from the tenets of orthodoxy upon this point first of all, and it was upon this point that Campbell, while associating with them, first came to have these doubts which issued in his separation from the Seceder Church of Scotland.

Naturally, too, this point early came up for consideration in the *Christian Baptist*. In the first volume of that periodical, a series of articles by Mr.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

Campbell on the Work of the Holy Spirit appeared, in which, pursuing the negative method which characterized that period of his work, he states four positions which he opposes:

(1) That "an invisible, indescribable energy is exerted upon the minds of men to make them Christians, and that too independent of, or prior to, the Word believed;" that is, that the Spirit is poured out like a sort of fluid and that through this agency the elect are regenerated before they have faith. A devout preacher is quoted as saying that he was regenerated about three years before he believed in Christ, during which time he was a saved man. (2) That all men are spiritually dead and helpless, unable to take a single step toward God, until this supernatural act of regeneration has been performed upon them. Here appears the protest against the Augustinian and Calvinistic anthropology, with its emphasis upon the fall of man and the blighting effects of original sin. (3) That sinners must

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

pass through a period of terror and despair—comparable to the Slough of Despond in *Pilgrim's Progress*—before they can believe the Gospel. (4) That physical signs of pardon are to be sought, and that emotional conditions are to be made the criterion by which one is to judge whether he is accepted by God. It is not a question of how you feel, but whether you have done those simple things which the sinner is commanded to do and is perfectly able to do.

In the second volume of the *Christian Baptist*, this negative statement is followed by a positive statement of his own position, under the head, "The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Salvation of Man." The following statement will show the position maintained here as compared with that denied above:

(1) The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Wisdom, through the Scripture which it has dictated, gives man all the knowledge which he possesses about God and spiritual things. Knowledge of God's

will is the first step in turning toward him; therefore the reading and acceptance of the testimony given by the Spirit through the Word is the first step in salvation.

(2) The Holy Spirit makes possible the acceptance of the testimony in the Scriptures, not by a creative act for each individual, but by a series of evidences which have been given once for all. It is as natural for a man to believe testimony as to see light or hear sound. A tendency to doubt, acquired through frequent deception, is the only sort of incapacity which man has for receiving God's revelation; and there is needed to remove it, not a mysterious creative act of "enabling grace" giving a man new faculties, but evidence which the man can grasp with the faculties which he already has. The Holy Spirit, therefore, has given not only testimony concerning God, but evidence of the truth of that testimony. Among the evidences, given by the Spirit to the truth of its testimony, are: (a) *Miracles*,

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

or the "suspension of known laws of nature," which prove the presence of some power superior to the law. The nature of the miracle and its immediate purpose show the moral character of the miracle-worker. We know that the miracles of Jesus were done by the Spirit of God and not by Beelzebub, because they were beneficent works. (b) *Special spiritual gifts*, by which is meant the miraculous powers which were given to some of the early disciples to aid them in proclaiming the Gospel. (c) *Prophecy* is a spiritual gift and also a particular kind of miracle which had a special evidencing power. It includes both the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus and his own prophecies of future events in his own life, *e. g.*, the fish with the coin, the man with the water-jar, the colt tied, his own death and resurrection, the destruction of the Temple and the fall of Jerusalem.

The written words describing the miracles, spiritual gifts and prophecies are the work of the spirit as much as were

the original things themselves, and are equally capable of giving evidence for the support of the testimony. The work of the Holy Spirit is therefore permanently divided into two parts: as the Spirit of Wisdom it reveals the nature and will of God; as the Spirit of Power it gives evidence of the truth of this testimony. The "natural man" of 1 Corinthians is not the Calvinistic natural man, who has the revelation and the evidences but lacks "enabling grace"; it is man with the natural human reason but without the revelation of the Spirit or the evidence of its truth.

So far Mr. Campbell's thought about the work of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of man presents a clear and consistent system, conforming to the psychology of sensationalism. In his own words (*Christian System*, p. 68): "We cannot separate the Spirit and the Word of God. Whatever the Word does the Spirit does, and whatever the Spirit does in the work of converting men the Word does." Up to this point the reference

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

has been to the Spirit's relation to the process by which men become Christians. And so far his position is thoroughly in accord with that view of man which considers him a creature who can be reached only through the intellect (*i. e.*, only by the impartation of ideas), and whose intellect can be reached only through the senses. The Spirit influences men by revealing to them ideas about God and spiritual things; these ideas are couched in words, audible to the hearer and visible to the reader; and this testimony is backed by evidence which man cannot doubt without doubting his senses. There is nothing mysterious about the operation of the Spirit. It creates no new faculties in the mind, removes no natural impotence of the soul, and neither cleanses nor quickens except through the agency of ideas expressed in words.

But when it came to the description of the influence of the Spirit upon the individual after he has accepted the Gospel, it was impossible to formulate a

statement which at once met the practical religious requirements and conformed to the accepted view of the constitution of man. In this dilemma, the religious interest prevailed and the logical suffered. At the same time there was developed a confusing variability in the definition and use of terms.

In the debate with Mr. Rice, in 1843, Mr. Campbell maintained the proposition that "in conversion and sanctification the Spirit of God operates on persons only through the Word." From the correspondence which preceded this debate, it is evident that it was the desire of both parties to state this proposition in such a way as to commit Mr. Campbell to the defense of the position that *all* the operations of the Spirit are through the Word. The wording of the proposition as given above was not altogether satisfactory to Mr. Campbell, not because it was too sweeping and inclusive, but because it seemed to imply that conversion and sanctification were different processes.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In his opening speech in this debate he clears up this point as follows: "Regeneration, conversion, justification, sanctification, etc., are frequently represented as component parts of one process; whereas, any one of these, independent of the others, gives a full representation of the subject." Evidently he means to use the terms as synonymous, each of them covering the entire process from the sinner's initial turning to God until the final perfecting of the Christian character. The several terms represent the process under several distinct figures. A similar statement is made in the *Christian System* (p. 276): "We are not to suppose that regeneration is something which must be added to the faith, the feeling and the action of the believer, which are the effects of the testimony of God understood and embraced. It is only another name for the same process in all its parts." Again (*Rice Debate*, p. 613): "Conversion is a term denoting that whole moral and spiritual change which is sometimes called sanctification,

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

sometimes regeneration. These are not three changes, but one change indicated by these three terms, regeneration, conversion, sanctification."

Taking into consideration only the statements in the Campbell-Rice debate, this position is consistently maintained, that the Spirit exerts no influence upon man at any time or in any way, except through the agency of the Word. This proposition is sustained by arguments drawn from Locke's philosophy, from which it is shown that the nature of man is such that he can be influenced only through words. The first argument is entitled, "From the Constitution of the Human Mind," and the substance of it is as follows: The human mind, like the body, has a specific and well-defined constitution. The Spirit of God does not change any of a man's faculties, but only sets before them new material. As the body can be nourished only by what enters by the ordained channel, so the soul can receive nourishment only if it is approached in a manner conformable to

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

its immutable nature. All knowledge of the sensible universe comes through sensation and reflection. Knowledge of God comes by faith, but "faith comes by hearing," and hearing is sensation. The Word, spoken or written, must precede the hearing or reading which is necessary for faith. Faith is the first converting, regenerating, sanctifying principle, and faith is the acceptance of testimony. No faith, no conversion or sanctification; no hearing, no faith; no Word, no hearing. Hence the Spirit in these activities always acts through the Word.

The Lockianism of this argument is obvious. First, it bases itself explicitly upon the Lockian doctrine that "all knowledge comes through sensation and reflection." Second, it embodies a purely intellectual view of faith. Third, it contains implicitly, a protest, elsewhere made explicitly against what he calls "metaphysical regeneration,"—a protest which is strikingly parallel to Locke's turning away from the realm of metaphysics and limiting philosophy to

the consideration of the powers of the human mind, with particular reference to the problem of knowledge. Adopting this general point of view, Campbell defined salvation, not in terms of mysterious changes made by the Spirit in the soul of man, but in terms of knowledge. The question of conversion and regeneration is therefore solved, not by considering how the nature of man's soul may be changed by the removal of original sin, etc., but by considering how man,—the natural man, with the powers which Locke has ascribed to him in his *Essay*—can come to a knowledge of the will of God and of the advantages which flow from obedience to it.

The second argument in support of the general proposition is that “there is nowhere a single Christian or spiritual idea that has not been derived from the Bible. This declaration is sustained not only by a general reference to “the known facts of the history of religion” (from which it would be obviously impossible to establish such a sweeping

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

proposition), but also by the use of the same Lockian argument as that involved in the preceding. Man derives the material for his ideas solely through the senses. But no sensations given by objects of the natural world could furnish the material for Christian or spiritual ideas. Therefore the sensations must come audibly or visibly through revelation. The Word is the only audible or visible product of revelation. Therefore spiritual ideas come only through the Word.

In the debate with Mr. Rice, Mr. Campbell is a thorough-going and consistent Lockian in his conclusions and in his arguments. He defines conversion, regeneration and sanctification as synonymously denoting the entire process by which the sinner is transformed into the perfect Christian, and gives no hint that the Spirit operates in this whole process otherwise than through the Word. A study of the *Christian System* will reveal two facts: first, that in that work the terms are sometimes used in a differ-

ent sense; and second, that there are indications of the recognition of an influence of the Spirit in sanctification which could not be accounted for on strictly Lockian principles.

In one of his characteristic sweeping generalizations in which he schematizes the whole divine plan in one brief outline, he asserts (*Christian System*, p. 64) that "The entire change effected in man by the Christian system, consists of four things:" (1) A change of views—faith; (2) a change of affections—repentance and reconciliation; (3) a change of state,—being born again, a change effected by baptism; and (4) a change of life or character—conversion. In expounding this arrangement, Mr. Campbell deplors and criticises the indiscriminate use of terms which confuses the whole subject, by using the term "regeneration," for example, in reference to the entire change,—a usage which he asserts is quite unscriptural. He continues: "But suppose it should be conceded that the term regeneration

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

might be just equivalent to 'being born again,' it could even then represent only so much of this change as respects mere *state*." Compare this with the previously quoted statement from the Campbell-Rice debate, that regeneration is synonymous with conversion and that both represent the entire change.

Continuing, (*Christian System*, p. 65) he says: "Being born again is, or may be, the effect of a change of views, of a change of affections, or it may be the cause of a change of life; but certain it is, it is not identical with any of them, and never can represent them all." But again, abandoning the synonymous use of the terms "regeneration" and "being born again," and reverting to the inclusive definition of the former which is expressed in the Rice debate, he says, (*Christian System*, p. 280): "Being born again is only the last act of regeneration."

And yet again, to cite a final variation of usage, bearing in mind the definition of regeneration as equivalent to sancti-

fication, note the following (*Christian System*, p. 284): "All that is done in us before regeneration, God our Father effects through the Word, or the Gospel as dictated and confirmed by His Holy Spirit. But after we are thus begotten and born by the Spirit of God—after our new birth—the Holy Spirit is shed on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; of which the peace of mind, the love, the joy, and the hope of the regeneration are full proof; for these are among the fruits of that Holy Spirit of promise of which we speak." In this passage there is clearly a use of the term "regeneration" as signifying the processes which culminate in the beginning of the Christian life, but certainly not including the subsequent growth in grace which is included in the definition of the Campbell-Rice debate.

We are therefore driven to the conclusion that, though Mr. Campbell's type of mind naturally inclined him to the making of schemes and outlines of the process of salvation, he was not consist-

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

ent in his use of terms, and it is impossible to transfer a definition given in one place to an argument in another without doing injustice to his thought. For example: It has been asserted that he believed in baptismal regeneration, and it is not difficult to construct a plausible argument. He connects baptism with the new birth, defining the latter here as mere change of state; elsewhere he uses the new birth as synonymous with regeneration; still elsewhere he defines regeneration as indicating the whole change effected by the Christian system. Therefore, baptism effects the whole change by which the sinner becomes a perfect Christian. Such an argument is as fallacious as it is plausible, because the middle terms are both used in double senses.

But there is involved in the last quotation something more than a loose use of terms. There is a recognition of a different kind of influence of the Spirit from that which he has previously asserted to be the only possible method

consistent with the constitution of the human mind. Before regeneration, he says, the Spirit does its work only through the Word; but after we are born anew the "Holy Spirit is shed on us richly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour." The latter method, though not closely defined, is clearly distinguished from the influence through the Word. In immediate connection with the last passage quoted, Mr. Campbell distinguishes between "the bath of regeneration," which is the culmination of the Spirit's activity through the Word, and "the renewing of the Holy Spirit." He continues: "But this pouring out of the influences, this renewing of the Holy Spirit, is as necessary as the bath of regeneration to the salvation of the soul and to the enjoyment of the hope of heaven of which the apostle speaks. In the kingdom into which we are born of water, the Holy Spirit is as the atmosphere in the kingdom of nature; we mean that the influences of the Holy Spirit are as necessary to the new life as

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

the atmosphere is to our animal life in the kingdom of nature.”

How that atmosphere-like influence of the Spirit operates upon man, when man is so organized that he can receive ideas and impressions only through the senses, is nowhere fully explained. There is a hint when he says that, so long as the senses remain the only avenues to the soul of man, so long will the ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, remain valid and necessary means of grace. But beyond this there is scarcely a suggestion, and one is forced to believe that at this point Mr. Campbell found his philosophy inadequate for the explanation of a truth which he felt to be real and actual. The value of prayer for spiritual aid and strength was a fact which religion demanded and which he recognized and expressed. He says: “It is the duty of Christians to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. This requires aid. Hence, assistance is to be prayed for, and it is promised. The Holy Spirit, then, is the author of all our holiness; and in the

struggle after victory over sin and temptation it helps our infirmities, and comforts us by seasonably bringing to our remembrance the promises of Christ, and strengthens us with all might in the inner man.''

In the philosophy of Locke there is no room for a philosophy of prayer, least of all of prayer for strength against temptation and comfort in trouble. There is no room for any influence of the Spirit except through channels which appeal to the senses, *i. e.*, the Word and the ordinances. Mr. Campbell recognized the fact of such a spiritual influence, but he had no other philosophy to fall back upon. Consequently, he forsook his system at this point and stated religious truth simply as religious truth, ignoring the fact that it could not be logically coordinated with his system.

A thinker is always at his best at the point where he finds his system too small to contain him. Mr. Campbell inherited a conception of God as a transcendent, extra-mundane Being, who

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

could direct human events only by breaking through the laws of nature in sheer miracle; and a conception of man as a being who could be moved only by ideas (*i. e.*, by an appeal to the intellect) and could be reached only through the senses. These philosophical presuppositions were of the highest service in clearing the ground of certain baneful superstitions which had troubled the religious world. The philosophy of the Enlightenment was a philosophy of common sense, of clearness and distinctness, and the sworn foe to all forms of mysticism. But, based on a psychology too clear and simple to be profound, and which later thought has shown to be shallow and one-sided, it could give no explanation to the richer depths of religious experience.

For the theologian who had at his command no other philosophy than this, there were two courses open: he might adhere rigidly to the philosophy and issue either in the arid orthodoxy which characterized the latter part of the

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

eighteenth century in England, or in deism verging constantly toward complete negation; or, he might use the philosophy as far as possible consistently with the requirements of his religious consciousness, and abandon it when its limitations would force him into undesirable paths. Mr. Campbell chose the latter alternative. It was this desertion of the philosophy which he had used in the greater part of his system, that gave Mr. Campbell the right to repudiate what he calls the "word alone" theory as "the parent of a cold, lifeless rationalism and formality." The sensational philosophy logically followed out leads to the word-alone theory in its baldest and most extreme form.

To summarize, the following points may be cited as evidence of the Lockianism of Mr. Campbell's position in regard to the influence of the Holy Spirit:

(1) He protests against the idea of metaphysical regeneration and states the whole process in terms of knowledge;

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Locke turned the attention of philosophers for a century away from metaphysics to the theory of knowledge.

(2) So far as he adheres to the logical requirements of his system, he makes the Word, a thing cognizable by the senses, the only means by which the Spirit influences man; Locke laid down the principle that man is so constituted that he can receive influences only through the senses.

(3) He protested against making the emotions a criterion in religion and emphasized the simple elements of sense experience as the universal element in the Gospel,—not “how do you feel?” but “what do you believe and what have you done?” Locke considered the intellectual element of human experience based on the sensations, as the universal element; emotions are purely individual and incommunicable, except when translated into terms of intellectual concepts.

CHAPTER IX
The Idea of God

THE IDEA OF GOD.

- I. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IDEA OF GOD:
 1. Governs the conception of all doctrines.
 2. A matter of emphasis, not of definition.
- II. THE INHERITED IDEA—TRANSCENDENCE:
 1. Covenant Theology.
 2. Puritanism.
 3. Orthodox apologetics.
 4. Deism.
- III. TRANSCENDENCE IN CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY:
 1. The Kingdom of God.
 2. Man's inability to know God except through Revelation, emphasizes God's extra-mundane existence.
 3. All authority external—God, as seat of authority is not indwelling.
 4. The Book gives only hypothetical imperative; loyalty to Person of Christ gives categorical imperative.
- IV. AN EIGHTEENTH OR A NINETEENTH CENTURY THEOLOGY?
 1. Eighteenth century in basis and content.
 2. Nineteenth century in method of use.
 3. The "return to nature."

THE IDEA OF GOD.

The most fundamental conception in any system of theology is the conception of God. All particular doctrines are outgrowths and amplifications of this. But a theologian's idea of God is not to be estimated by his formal definitions of the Divine Personality, His attributes and modes of existence. There is little difference of opinion in regard to the attributes of Deity. That he is One, Holy, All-wise, All-powerful, that he is a righteous King, a loving Father, the omnipotent Creator and Ruler of the universe,—these are not points which arouse discussion among Christian thinkers. Even the metaphysical question as to the modes of the divine existence is not one of the first importance in estimating a theologian's conception of God.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

The question which arises in connection with every system of theology is rather, What idea of God is most emphasized in it? What aspect of Deity is it that appeals most strongly to the author, and determines his conception of the doctrines of Christianity? What phase of the character of God is most prominent in his statement of the relation between God and man. It might easily be that the same definition of the divine attributes would satisfy at once a mystic and a scholastic. Neither would find in it anything to deny; the mystic would emphasize the immanence of God and would therefore conceive of God's relation to man as one of communion, while the scholastic would emphasize the ideas of transcendence and authority. Accordingly, the consideration of the idea of God must be based upon a generalization from the entire system. Although logically first, since it is fundamental to the system, it must be considered last, as a conclusion of the study of all the particular doctrines.

THE IDEA OF GOD

Since the estimate is largely a matter of noting the relative emphasis upon different phases of the character of God, it must depend not upon isolated quotations, but upon a broad generalization. It will easily be possible to cite passages from Mr. Campbell's works, as from the writings of any other theologian, which explicitly recognize elements in the divine character which exercised little influence in his formulation of the doctrines. And it may be, too, that different critics would gain different impressions as to the relative emphasis upon various attributes. The personal equation must play a large part in such an estimate. The aim is to feel the spirit, divine the innermost motive, and catch the dominant note of the system.

The conception of God which orthodox Protestantism developed during the first three centuries of its history, laid great emphasis upon His transcendence, practically to the exclusion of the immanence. Of Calvinism this was pre-eminently true, but it was scarcely less

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

true of the Covenant Theology, which laid special stress upon God's function as the organizer of a government and a giver of laws, which man must obey if he wishes to obtain the benefits that the government can confer.

Puritanism in England developed an idea of God which has become proverbial for its austerity. God was conceived as an essentially extra-mundane Being, handing down a revelation of himself to men from the abyss of infinite space which was his habitation. The laws of nature were his commands, but their uniform operation did not indicate his continued presence. But with this conception of a God whose most notable attributes were majesty, power and transcendence, they united a sublime faith in the Providence which watched over their lives and fortunes. The transcendent God honored his chosen people by breaking over the laws which he had established, to come to their relief in time of need. But special Providence, so interpreted, meant the irruption of a

THE IDEA OF GOD

transcendent God into a sphere of activity which was not normal to him.

The orthodox apologetics of the eighteenth century proceeded upon a conception of God not essentially dissimilar to that of the Puritans. The apologists attempted to prove, by arguments drawn from the constitution of nature and the evidences of design and intelligent adaptation which it presents, that, at the beginning of the process which is now represented by the on-going of natural laws, there stood a creative God. This the deists were, in general, inclined to admit. But whereas the deists maintained that the God who created the universe had been a passive spectator ever since the day of creation, the orthodox believed that he had from time to time broken through the shell of natural law which shuts Him from His world, and had given to men a body of revealed truth concerning Himself. Both the deists and the orthodox interpreted revelation in the same way, as an arbitrary and abnormal incursion of a transcendent

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

God into the sphere of human activities. The former held that such an interruption of the natural order had never occurred; the latter believed that it had occurred. The conception of God and of revelation was fundamentally the same in both. Their dispute was primarily over a question of fact, as to whether God had or had not done a certain thing.

Inheriting the theological concepts of the Covenant Theology and of the English Enlightenment on its orthodox side, it would have been surprising if Mr. Campbell had not had at the center of his system a conception of God as primarily a transcendent Being, whose most characteristic function was the giving of laws. It is no disparagement to him to say that it was so. It was a limitation which he shared with nearly all of the writers of his time. By glancing at some of his doctrines, as defined in previous chapters, some suggestions may be derived for estimating his conception of God, and some illustrations

THE IDEA OF GOD

may be found of the way in which the current conception was embodied in his doctrinal statements.

A suggestion is at once afforded by the fact that, as previously stated, the logical basis of Mr. Campbell's constructive theological thinking is his idea of the Kingdom of God. In other words, it is the idea of God as the head of a monarchical government, of which men must be subjects in order to secure their own highest welfare. The Covenant relation between God and man goes far toward softening the rigor of the transcendence, as viewed by Calvinism. God is no longer conceived as an omnipotent Being who seeks to show forth His own glory by arbitrarily appointing some of His subjects to enjoy eternal life and others to endure eternal agony. He makes terms with man and throws upon him the responsibility of working out his own salvation. But the Kingship is still the essential function of the divine character. God does not arbitrarily predestine one man to blessing and another

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

to eternal woe, but he lays down conditions, one of which at least is a command arbitrarily imposed as a test of obedience. The division of the divine commands under the covenants into two classes, moral and positive (which from another point of view might be termed reasonable and arbitrary), after the analogy of the two kinds of human laws which exist under the social contract, is itself a suggestive feature.

In treating of the means of knowing God and the seat of religious authority, the same general conception is clearly present. The statement, often repeated and much depended upon by Mr. Campbell, that every idea of God comes from the Bible, virtually means that, so far as man's cognitive powers are concerned, God is not in nature or history; He is in the world only at those points where he has chosen to make a special revelation of himself. Occasional statements to the effect that the laws of nature are the laws of God, that the thunder is His voice and that the heavens declare His

THE IDEA OF GOD

glory, weigh little against the steadfastly maintained position that man can know God only through the revelation in the Book. Whether God is metaphysically present in the world or not, he is transcendent so far as man's knowledge of Him is concerned. The sensational theory of knowledge, by denying man's power to know God directly, even if He were in the world, unless He were present as a simple object of sense perception, forces its adherents to conceive of a God who is, in so far as He is known at all, transcendent.

The Book not only gives all the information which we have about God, but it is the sole seat of authority for religion. No stronger statement of this principle could be made than these words addressed by Mr. Campbell to B. W. Stone: "The truths of the Bible are to be received as first principles, not to be tried by our reasons one by one, but to be received as new principles from which we are to reason as from intuitive principles in any human science." His reliance

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

upon external authority was not peculiar to Mr. Campbell. It was present even with Locke, although the implications of his system which made it necessary had not yet been unfolded. Speaking of the impracticability of establishing rules of right conduct by reasoning and demonstration, Locke says: "You may as soon hope to have all the day-laborers and tradesmen, the spinsters and dairy-maids, perfect mathematicians, as to have them perfect in ethics this way. Hearing plain commands is the sure and only course to bring them to obedience and practice."

It seems paradoxical that a system so thoroughly individualistic as Locke's, should, in the hands of its most earnest adherents, become the starting-point for a new return to authority. It was so because it exhibited the weakness and insufficiency of the human individual, as well as his worth. In its outcome it showed that man, as defined by it, could not develop out of himself the canons of either ethics or religion. Hence a return

THE IDEA OF GOD

to external authority is necessary. So Locke recognizes the three-fold law, the law of God, of the state and of public opinion; every ethical writer who followed him gave a prominent place to the concepts of law and authority; and Campbell, treating of the ground of religion rather than of ethics, lays the same stress upon authority and law, and refers to the Book as the proximate source of both.

The significance of this entire return to external authority, as regards the idea of God, lay in its implication that divinity dwells not in man, nor in the world where it is accessible to man and apprehensible by him, but in some far distance so remote that He comes within the cognizance of man only when it pleases Him to reveal Himself in some special way. The Being who stands forth clearly in the foreground of religion, in connection with this emphasis upon the externality of religious authority, is a transcendent God who stands above and away from the world and, by sheer

authority, brings order and harmony out of a world which the sensational philosophy had shown to be a mere disintegrated mass of individuals and particulars. That attitude of mind, represented by both Locke and Campbell, which turned away from questions of metaphysics and attached importance only to the problem of knowledge, would not be deeply interested in the question as to whether or not God is, in some real sense, immanent in the world and in the soul of man. It is satisfied with its conclusion that God cannot be *known* as immanent, that the human mind can grasp only the verbal and sensible revelation of a transcendent God, and that religious faith and practice are therefore to be governed solely by the laws laid down in the revealed Word.

As has been pointed out in a previous chapter, there was developed out of the sensational theory of knowledge a theological and an ethical utilitarianism which, in spite of its practical virtues, tended to destroy the spontaneity of both

THE IDEA OF GOD

religion and ethics, and to reduce them to the level of egoistic hedonism with a veneer of piety and morality. Even the Covenant Theology had been somewhat weak in its presentation of Christian obedience as a duty, and unduly strong in presenting it as a means of gaining an advantage. According to English utilitarianism, stated in its baldest form, the good man is he who takes account not only of the pleasures of sin for a season, but also of the greater pleasure which will in the future be the reward of virtue.

But any authority which operates on this basis, can be, after all, only a conditional authority: *if* you desire to attain a certain end, then obey the command. According to this view, even the command of God is only a *hypothetical imperative*, to be obeyed *if* one wishes to secure the benefits which accrue from obedience. But neither ethics nor religion can be satisfied with anything short of a *categorical imperative*—an authority, either external or internal,

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

not conditioned upon the desirability of some more ultimate end. An authority which is entirely external can never be more than conditionally binding. When Mr. Campbell said that the philosophy of the Bible is the philosophy of human happiness, he gave recognition to this principle. Since the Bible is a purely external authority, its commands can be enforced only by an appeal to the happiness which will follow obedience and the woe which is the fruit of disobedience. By making the seat of religious authority completely external to man—a transcendent God speaking only through the written Word—Campbell's theology, by his own admission, disqualified itself for going farther than the hypothetical imperative of a spiritualized utilitarianism.

But religious fervor did what his theological statement could not do. The authority of the New Testament, the Christian's law-book, reverts back to the authority of Christ. Interpreted coldly, according to Campbell's own

THE IDEA OF GOD

theory, this means that the commands of Christ are to be obeyed because of the happiness which will follow. But the introduction of the Person of Christ brings in a new element which had no place in the formal theory, but had a most vitalizing effect on the system. However selfishly utilitarian might be the thought of obeying the commands of the Bible for the sake of its rewards, the bringing to light of the Person in and behind the Book, introduces an element of personal loyalty and devotion which banishes every thought of obedience from a selfish motive.

Shaftesbury's ethical system, though theoretically utilitarian, was warmed and quickened by a splendid "enthusiasm for society," which saved it from degenerating into a mercenary exchange of obedience for pleasure. So with Campbell, the idea of divine authority was kept on a high plane by personal loyalty to Christ, though his theology was based, as he himself says, on the philosophy of happiness. An enthusi-

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

asm for the person of Christ furnished the key to the religious categorical imperative.

On the basis of the foregoing considerations, may it not be said that Alexander Campbell's religion was more Christocentric than his theology?

In many respects, Mr. Campbell's theology was a typical product of the English Enlightenment. The idea of God which it embodies and the philosophical instruments, which were used in the formation of the system of doctrine, belonged to the eighteenth century. In a limited sense it may be truly said that it is an eighteenth century theology. But in a more important respect, his thought was thoroughly of the nineteenth century. In his doctrinal formulations, he looked toward the eighteenth century; in the comparatively inconspicuous place which he gave to all doctrinal statements in the movement which he led, he belonged to the nineteenth.

Among the most significant move-

THE IDEA OF GOD

ments of thought at the beginning of the nineteenth century was that which was represented by Wordsworth and Tennyson in English letters,—casting off the fetters of classicism and seeking a freer and a truer view of life and art, by a “return to nature.” Simplicity and naturalness were the watchwords of the new school, and its only rule was to be free from rules.

To pass from Pope to Wordsworth is like passing from the tiresome formalism of a royal court to an open meadow full of wild flowers and wild birds. It is like passing from the heavy air of traditional sectarianism out under the free heaven of religious liberty and charity.

Parallel with this literary movement with its cry, “Back to Nature,” came a religious movement with the cry, “Back to Christ and the Christianity of the New Testament.” Both sought freedom and simplicity,—freedom by setting aside the rules and restrictions which were prescribed by tradition alone, and simplicity by putting off all those artificial embel-

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY

lishments, whether literary or religious, which obscured the very essence of the naked truth. As the religious parallel and contemporary of this literary movement, Mr. Campbell's religious reformation may rightfully claim to be a distinctly nineteenth century movement.

The theology taught by Mr. Campbell has come into more or less general acceptance among the Disciples of Christ. If it shall be shown that it is an eighteenth century theology, and that there is therefore a presumption that it is not the best suited to the needs of the present, it need cause them no embarrassment. By their elastic constitution they are free to change and develop their theology in the light of the best thought of each succeeding generation.

And, after all, the most important and significant point about Alexander Campbell's theology was the use which he made of it. It was not a creed. It was not claimed to be a statement of all truth. It was not the theology of a church.; It was simply ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S THEOLOGY.



* 0114201330 *

BUTLER STACKS

938.92

G1933

